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Biography

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**CŒUR DE LION**





# CŒUR DE LION

BY

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## PREFACE

By one of those master-strokes of quiet irony for which we, as a nation, are deservedly famous, we have chosen to place our only existing statue of King Richard I, surnamed Cœur de Lion, immediately outside the entrance to the Houses of Parliament, an institution he had never heard of and would certainly have disliked if he had. He is partnered there by Oliver Cromwell, whose best-remembered contact with Parliament is his brief order to one of his servants to 'Remove that bauble.'

But though the disposers of our public statues seem strangely to have mistaken Richard's place in the national life and history, no such misconception exists in the mind of the average Englishman, to whom Richard will always remain the supreme type of the Crusading soldier-king, and in whose memory the story of Blondel will continue to live when that of

Magna Carta, in spite of its nineteenth-century 'boost,' is utterly forgotten.

I propose to take that view of Richard myself—not because it makes a better story, but because it is clear from the original authorities that the average Englishman is right and the nineteenth-century historians wrong. Richard is no subject for the psychological dissecting table. In spite of that dark, passionate Angevin background to his character, his simple heart lies open for all to see. He was a man of action, who expressed himself in action. I have therefore tried to illustrate his character by telling of his deeds. In other words, this book will consist, mainly, of narrative.

His reign is well documented. I have relied mainly upon T. A. Archer's well-known translation of the English chroniclers, and C. W. Wilson's version of the Saracen historian, Bohadin, and have not thought it necessary, as a general rule, to mention any particular chronicler by name. Later authorities are acknowledged in footnotes. But my greatest debt by far is to Miss Kate Norgate, whose indispensable *Richard the Lion Heart* (London,

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1924) brings all the evidence together in masterly fashion. I have shamelessly adopted her chronology and her general view of the course of events.

Finally, I have to thank Mr. F. G. Lowick, of the Palestine Civil Service, at one time Deputy Military Governor of Acre, who has most obligingly placed at my disposal his knowledge of the topography of the Crusade and the results of his personal study, undertaken on the spot, of Richard's Eastern campaign. And perhaps I may add that I have myself paid frequent visits to Messina, Cyprus and the Holy Land.



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From second Gt. Seal of Richard I

# I

## TURBULENT YOUTH

HENRY II of England, first of our Angevin kings, founder of the great dynasty of the Plantagenets, was riding home to Oxford from the west. He had every reason to be satisfied with the position of his affairs. The realm to which he had succeeded by treaty, on the death of his cousin, King Stephen, was now one of the most powerful in Europe. Stephen had been King of England and Duke of Normandy. But Henry, when he stepped, unopposed, into Stephen's empty shoes, brought with him Anjou and Touraine, which he had inherited from his father, and all the duchy of Aquitaine, the seven provinces of Poitou, Saintogne, Auvergne, Périgord, Limousin, Angoumois and Guienne, which had come to him as the dowry of his wife, Eleanor. In fact, he found himself ruler of the larger half of France.

To England Henry had brought peace and an orderly government, after a period of anarchy and confusion unexampled in our records since the Danish invasion. He had

just made a tour of the north and west, and received the submission of the last of the nobles who opposed his title to the throne ; he had recovered from Malcolm of Scotland the three counties of Northumberland, Westmorland and Cumberland, which had been in Scottish hands ever since Stephen's accession twenty years before ; and he had led an army into Wales and re-established the royal authority there. His reward was a popularity such as no Norman king (with the possible exception of Henry I) had ever enjoyed.

With the ecclesiastical authorities he was on excellent terms, and notably with the two most important of them—Nicholas Breakspeare, the first and only English Pope, and Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. His closest friend and counsellor was one Thomas à Becket, whom, five years later, he was to thrust upon the monks of Canterbury as Theobald's successor.

Now, in the first week of September 1157, he was on his way back to Oxford to rejoin his wife, while gratifying protestations of loyalty poured in upon him at every town he passed.

Yet he was not a very attractive figure as he rode eastward at the head of his men. Close-cropped hair and a fiery red countenance surmounted a short, powerfully-built body, the appearance of which was not improved by

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the beginnings of what a Victorian historian<sup>1</sup> has politely described as 'an unseemly protuberance of the abdomen.' Henry was only twenty-seven years of age, but his legs were bent, and his eyes were protruding and blood-shot—flaming to a terrible red in moments of anger, which were all too common with him. His whole bearing was suggestive of indomitable energy and that combative spirit which never left him to his dying day. It was said of him that he never sat still. Behind his rough exterior and his blasphemous language he was a man of some culture and (when he cared to exercise it) considerable personal charm, talkative, fond of a joke, and possessed of a wonderful memory for faces which greatly assisted him in his relations with his new subjects. In spite of his complexion, he was abstemious at table ; untidy in his dress but methodical in business ; an able, industrious administrator ; an indifferent soldier. He had many loyal supporters, but those who were nearest to him loved him least. There is a general agreement that you could not trust his word.

Now, as he rode into Oxford, news was brought to him from the Queen's bedside of the birth on September 8th of the third of his tempestuous sons. The boy was named

<sup>1</sup> Lingard.

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Richard, and a foster-mother was found for him, a woman of the people, named Hodierna, whose home was at St. Albans. She had a son of her own, born on the very same night, and presumably brought up with the royal princeling, and she must have found the boys a strange contrast, since all that is known of the foster-brother, Alexander Neckham (as he called himself), is his authorship of a learned treatise on natural science.

Of Richard's boyhood there is almost nothing to tell. He was the third of five sons—William (who died in infancy), Henry, Richard, Geoffrey and John. When he was two years old the extent of his inheritance had already been decided upon by his father. It was to be the duchy of Aquitaine. As soon as he was old enough to understand such matters, he must have been told this ; and must further have realised that he would probably have to fight for his rights, since most of King Henry's French possessions were in a state of simmering rebellion during the greater part of his reign. This fact governed the education of the three elder sons, all of whom took to fighting as a duck does to water. But there is strong evidence that young Richard, alone of the three, carried the matter beyond the mere breaking of lances and soon began to display a keen interest in the technique of the soldier's

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profession. In the meantime his thoughts were always turned towards France. *Hodierna* may have talked to him in English, but his natural language was Norman-French.

Richard was in Normandy with his mother and father in 1163, and would hear of the continual bickerings between Henry and his French subjects, who were greatly encouraged in their opposition to his claims by the quarrel between the King and his new Archbishop, à Becket, now at its height. The nobles of Aquitaine, Richard's duchy, rose in rebellion and 'went about ravishing with fire and sword'; Henry, in retaliation, 'destroyed the villages and fortresses of the rebels.' In 1164 the King was called back to Wales to deal with a formidable rising there. Worsted in the field, he took a shabby revenge upon his Welsh hostages, sons and daughters of the Celtic chiefs, who had been handed over as sureties for good behaviour: the boys were blinded and the girls had their ears and noses sliced off.

In France hostilities continued fitfully for another five years. The real driving force behind the opposition was to be found not in Toulouse or Barcelona but in Paris; and when at last Henry, recognising the presence there of a cooler head than his own, opened up serious negotiations with King Louis, the submission of his rebellious subjects followed automatically.



The English King's eldest surviving son, Henry, was crowned as his father's successor and was known as 'the young King.' He and his brother Richard, together with their father, now did homage to Louis as overlord for their several French estates ; and Richard, to clinch the bargain, was formally betrothed to the French King's daughter, Aloysia. After that there was nothing to prevent Henry from 'mopping up' the rebel strongholds in the south at his leisure.

But Henry had much more in mind, when he made this arrangement, than the conquest of Anjou and Aquitaine. His sons were growing up ; Henry and Richard were already in their teens ; all four of them were beginning to show signs of the well-known Plantagenet 'temperament,' which boded ill for the peace of Henry's new realm when the time came for him to resign the sceptre into their hands. His idea, undoubtedly, was to anticipate trouble by dividing his inheritance before he died—or, as we should say, 'standardising' his sons' careers. Such a plan had many disadvantages. For instance, the division was made before the birth of the youngest son, who was accordingly known as John 'Lackland'—and did not like the name. Nor was there any certainty that the young princes would be satisfied with their shares. Indeed, the only thing accomplished

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was that their discontents would find expression in their father's lifetime instead of after his death.

But if Henry, with unaccountable obtuseness, failed to perceive these implications, they were very clear to the mind of Louis of France. From the date of the signing of the agreement he studiously refrained from meddling in the affairs of Anjou and Aquitaine ; but he was equally careful to keep in touch with Henry's sons—especially the eldest. Henry, 'the young King,' seems to have had few redeeming qualities except his good looks—which he cannot have inherited from his father. His mother adored him, and it was with her encouragement, aided, no doubt, by Louis, that he began to nurse a grievance at being allowed no share in the government of England.

When he was eighteen (March 1173) he suddenly fled from his father's Court in Normandy and took refuge with Louis, who promptly signed a treaty undertaking to help him 'to gain possession of the kingdom of England.' Richard and his younger brother, Geoffrey, were then with their mother in Aquitaine. At the time of this first crisis in his career Richard was not yet sixteen. Without the slightest hesitation, the two boys hastened to join their brother in France. Eleanor attempted to follow them, disguised

as a man, but was overtaken by Henry's emissaries and brought back in disgrace.

As for Richard's conduct, it is not necessary to seek an explanation in the turbulent spirit of the Plantagenets, nor in that mad, impetuous streak which was presently to show itself in his own personal character. He was born and brought up under the feudal system. As long as he could remember he had been titular Duke of Aquitaine, and that duchy came to him not from his father, but from his mother. He did homage for it, not to the King of England, but to the King of France. He had now to choose between his mother and his liege lord on the one hand, and his father on the other. He chose the first—wrongly, no doubt. But it was not the obvious choice that it would have seemed to any decent-minded youth a century or two later when the feudal system had lost its spiritual significance.

Henry II, though a bad husband, was a trusting and affectionate father. In all the arrangements he had made for the disposal of his domains he had never visualised the possibility of an armed alliance against him by his own sons. Now he saw his heir, young Henry, preparing to invade Normandy in company with the King of France ; while Richard was hastening back to Aquitaine, where he endeavoured (with indifferent success) to rally

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the former rebels to his side. At the same time came news that the Scots had crossed the border with fire and sword ; there was a rebellion in Yorkshire ; another in Norfolk ; and a French fleet was lying off Gravelines, waiting for a favourable opportunity to transport an invading army to the English coast.

Henry staggered under these blows. His tortured mind went back to that terrible scene in Canterbury Cathedral only four years before, when a party of his own knights had struck down à Becket, the Archbishop, scattering his brains upon the chancel steps. He had not ordered that murder—though some angry words of his had been seized upon as a pretext for it ; but he could never clear his conscience of the crime. Now he set sail for England in the midst of a storm, landed at Southampton after a tempestuous crossing, and, without waiting to dine or sleep, rode on through the night towards Canterbury. When the cathedral towers came in sight he dismounted, dressed himself in penitent's garb, and walked barefoot over the rough roads into the town, so that the awe-struck inhabitants could trace his bloody footprints down the cobbled streets. At the tomb of St. Thomas he did public penance and submitted to be scourged.

After that—we read without surprise—he

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became severely ill and had to take to his bed. But, as the fever left him, he was conscious of a new peace of mind. And presently they came to tell him that the Scots had been defeated and their king taken ; that there was no longer any danger in England ; and that the army which had been raised to oppose his enemies at home might now be used to suppress the unnatural rebellion of his sons in France. ‘ The king,’ we are told, ‘ was leaning on his elbow, and slept a little ; a servant at his feet was gently rubbing them ; there was neither noise nor cry, nor any who were speaking there, neither harp nor viols were sounding at that hour, when the messenger came to the door and gently called.’ Such was the end of one of the most famous episodes in English history.

Richard was in Aquitaine. He was not doing much good there, but he meant business, and had taken several fortresses, though La Rochelle shut its gates in his face. Young Henry, on the other hand, hastened to make terms with his father and leave Richard in the lurch. When the latter realised this—he was now just seventeen—‘ he came weeping,’ and fell with his face on the ground at the feet of the King, his father, beseeching his forgiveness. It was readily given. A new treaty between the King and his sons was signed at Falaise, and Richard

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went back to Aquitaine as Henry's representative, entrusted with the task of recovering the whole duchy for his father. It proved a long and troublesome business, an affair of sieges—many of them protracted—with hardly an action in the open field. In 1176 he took Limoges and brought all northern Aquitaine into subjection. In the following year he did as much for Gascony, and led his army to the foot-hills of the Pyrenees, while Louis and Henry II argued interminably about the date of his impending marriage to Aloysia, who was waiting all this time at the English Court. Henry found her presence there very useful for bargaining purposes, and procrastinated accordingly. Louis, also for political reasons, strove to hasten the happy event. Richard had no strong feeling in the matter either way.

It was enough for young Richard that there was a job of soldiering to be done, and peace to be restored in his own duchy (as he always regarded it) of Aquitaine. He gave no thought to women and had not yet made the acquaintance of his future wife, Berengaria of Navarre. In later years vague suggestions of immorality were advanced against him—it was said that no woman was safe in any castle occupied by him—but his accusers were the rebel barons of Aquitaine, who by that time were beginning

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to writhe under his heavy hand, and there seems to be little substance in the charge. Cruel he was said to be by some, but no record has come down to us which marks him out as differing in any way from his contemporaries in this respect. It is certain that, like his father and all the Plantagenets, he was subject to black fits of anger, when wise men kept out of his way. And it may be admitted that, even in these early days, he was beginning to develop that remarkable talent for swearing with strange oaths which was the admiration of his companions when he went on the Crusade. 'By God's throat!' he would exclaim in moments of excitement, or 'God's teeth,' or 'God's legs.'

But in general he was, in contrast to his elder brother, a stern, purposeful young man, firmly set upon the accomplishment of whatever task lay before him, and as firmly determined to uphold his own rights. 'Among the virtues in which he excels,' wrote Gerald of Wales, the contemporary historian, 'three especially distinguish him beyond compare: supreme valour and daring; unbounded liberality and bountifulness; steadfast constancy in holding to his purpose and to his word.' That some people nicknamed him 'Richard Yea-and-Nay' did not mean that he was always changing his mind, though a modern historical

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novel has been written on that theme.<sup>1</sup> It meant exactly the opposite.

These sterner virtues in Richard's character, many of which were lacking in his father and Prince John, and almost all in his handsome elder brother, who probably outshone him socially—these virtues were at present more noticeable than that warmer side of his nature which in later and more prosperous years was to make him the idol of his soldiery and one of the most popular of English kings. Yet physical grace was not denied him. He was tall, long-limbed, athletic, his chin held high, and, in general, of 'a form worthy to occupy a place of high command.' He had a particularly long reach, which was useful in hand-to-hand fighting. His auburn hair was 'of a colour midway between red and yellow.' Such is the description of those who knew him in the flesh. On the other hand, owing, no doubt, to his continual campaigning at an age when modern boys are still at school, he had contracted a quartan ague. This affliction, in the opinion of Gerald of Wales, 'was given him to repress the over fierce workings of his mind ; but he, like the lion—yea, more than lion—that he was, seemed rather to be influenced by the ague as by a goad ; for while thus continually trembling, he remained intrepid

<sup>1</sup> *Richard Yea-and-Nay*. By Maurice Hewlett. London, 1900.



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in his determination to make the whole world tremble at him.'<sup>1</sup>

In considering the long succession of sieges, the laborious expulsion of rebel barons from stronghold after stronghold in Poitou and Aquitaine, which was to occupy most of Richard's time from the date at which we have now arrived until his accession to the throne, it is important to remember the peculiar conditions of European warfare in the latter part of the twelfth century. This was a period in the history of the art of war when the defence was, out of all proportion, stronger than the attack. In every campaign, therefore, the weaker side, instead of risking a battle, made haste to get into the nearest fortress, where it might reasonably hope to defend itself successfully while the food supplies held out.

The men of that age were mighty builders. For the rough earthworks and wooden palisades of the Saxons they had substituted those sturdy Norman keeps, so many of which still stare defiantly across the modern countryside. In their own day they were, for all practical purposes, impregnable. Up till the middle of the century the keep, or central tower, would be surrounded by a plain curtain wall ; but at the date we are now dealing with, smaller

<sup>1</sup> Miss Norgate thinks that this must be the first association of the lion with Cœur de Lion's name.

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towers were beginning to be added at intervals in the curtain, thrusting forward a little from the wall so as to give an enfilading fire along the ditch. Richard's father, Henry, about this time strengthened the curtain wall of the Tower of London with smaller towers (notably the Wakefield Tower). Sometimes an outer ward or system of defence would be added with a second curtain wall and towers, resulting in a concentric fortress of considerable extent, able to house a large garrison, with cattle and stores of grain.

All these details of castle-building must have been a matter of absorbing interest to the young Duke of Aquitaine. For we must never forget, if we are to understand his character, that Richard Cœur de Lion was not only a great leader in the field, but probably the most scientific military architect of his time.

But while the men of the twelfth century had made this tremendous advance upon the defensive constructions of their ancestors, their methods of attack, and the military engines which they employed against walls often twenty feet thick, showed hardly any improvement upon those used by the Visigoths six centuries before. The main ideas were still the same : either to reach the top of the walls by means of scaling-ladders, or very lofty wooden towers pushed forward on rollers (neither of which

could be got into position until the ditch had been bridged or filled) ; or to fall back upon the slower and more toilsome method of making breaches in the walls by mining or battering them. The movable tower was the method by which the Crusaders had effected an entry into Jerusalem in 1099, when the streets of the Holy City ran ankle-deep in blood—a success which must have given it considerable prestige in young Richard's eyes. It was probably more efficient than the primitive scaling-ladders ; but, being made of light wood, covered with raw hides, it was very vulnerable to attack from the walls and very apt to topple over in the soggy surface of a half-filled ditch. Mining was not ineffective if the shaft was sunk at a safe distance from the walls and if the ditch was a dry one<sup>1</sup> ; but even so, the miners would need the protection of a penthouse, and the defenders could always reply with counter-mines. If the mine shaft reached its objective beneath the walls it was shored up by wooden posts, which could be set on fire when it was desired that the walls should collapse and leave a breach for the attack.

Of the military engines in use at this time,

<sup>1</sup> The rival merits of dry and wet ditches were a matter of controversy among medieval soldiers. It seems clear that a wet ditch, or water-filled moat, made mining impossible.

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the ram and the bore were open to the same objection as the movable tower and the scaling-ladders—they could only be used when they had been brought close up to the walls. The ram, which was generally a tree-trunk, was intended to be banged against the wall until the mortar fell out and the whole structure collapsed ; the bore had a sharp iron point for picking out holes in the wall. In both cases the engineers would have to be protected by a penthouse and also, probably, by mantlets (hurdles covered with hide), which they held above their heads, or placed in rows upon the ground so as to make a covered way from the besiegers' lines to the foot of the walls.

More effective than these—since they could be operated out of range—were the mangonel, the balista and the trébuchet—all of them copied from the Romans ! The mangonel consisted of two strong posts joined by a double set of ropes. A beam was placed between the two sets of ropes and twisted round and round until sufficient force was generated. A large rock, or a lump of lead, was placed in an open receptacle at the top of the beam, which was then let go, so that it swung forward, hurling the missile against or over the wall as required. The aim was very uncertain. The balista was simply a gigantic crossbow (crossbows had been in use for over a century) with a string

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made of twisted gut. It discharged a heavy iron bolt, which, having a flat trajectory, could be aimed with some precision and was often used against the defenders on the top of the wall. Sir Charles Oman<sup>1</sup> quotes the statement of Procopius that, at the siege of Rome by Witiges, he saw a Gothic warrior who was in the act of climbing a tree, transfixed by a bolt from a balista which nailed him to the tree-trunk, so that his dead body hung there suspended for some time. The trébuchet was worked not by tension but by counterpoises of weight. A pole balanced on a pivot between two uprights was pulled back and held down by a small slot, while the missile was placed in a spoon-shaped cavity at the backward end ; heavy weights were hung on to the forward end ; and the backward end was then released from the slot, so that the pole swung over, hurling its projectile to a height and a distance that could be regulated by the number of weights. At the siege of Tortona in 1155 a stone from a trébuchet fell in the middle of the town, split into fragments against a wall and killed three knights who were standing in conversation before the cathedral door. Or it might throw a dead donkey—which is more than modern artillery can do !

Now all these technicalities were part of the

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*. London, 1898.

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ordinary daily life of young Richard of Aquitaine—indeed might almost be said to compose it—from the moment when he could first sit a horse. Arnald of Bonville, Vulgrin of Angoulême, Aimar of Limoges—all these people and many others fortified their castles against him, but he brought them to surrender one by one. Sometimes he would turn aside to assist his father in Normandy, where there were also rebels to be put down.

In 1179—he being then aged twenty-one—Richard undertook his most important military enterprise up to date : the siege of Taillebourg. By his contemporaries, indeed, it was considered a ‘desperate’ undertaking. Taillebourg, we are told, was ‘in no wise affrighted’ at his approach. It was an exceptionally strong fortress, surrounded by a triple ditch and triple walls, containing ample supplies of food and a garrison—very large for those days—of a thousand men, commanded by Geoffrey of Rancogne. But the luck was with Richard—or he knew his opponent well. He exasperated Geoffrey, first by setting fire to the surrounding villages, next by pitching his tents in insolent proximity to the castle walls. The besieged made a furious sally. Richard, more wide-awake than he seemed, called his men to arms, repulsed the assailants, and, following them in their flight through the gates of Taillebourg,

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soon made himself master of the place. He excelled in such stratagems as this—also in surprises and forced marches. And he was always eager for single combat.

The life and soul of the opposition was that typical twelfth-century ruffler, the troubadour, Bertrand de Born, 'a great squire of dames,' we are told, and as dangerous with his lance as with his tongue. Bertrand declared frankly that his ideal country was one in which 'the great men were always quarrelling among themselves.' To such a swashbuckler, Richard was a natural enemy, and in many of Bertrand's songs that have come down to us he figures as a savage young tyrant, while his father's Court in Normandy is mocked at as an abode of gloom, lacking in fun and laughter.

Yet Bertrand was won over in the end. In 1183 Richard was surrounded by enemies. His brothers, Henry and Geoffrey, had invaded his dominions with hired foreign troops. When Richard caught any of these mercenaries he hanged them out of hand or blinded them (hence the charges of cruelty). But he was hard pressed, and was receiving but half-hearted assistance from his father, with whom he had never been a favourite. When Henry II approached the walls of Limoges, which had been seized by Henry, 'the young King,' he was received with a flight of arrows, one

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of which glanced off his armour, nearly wounding him. Riding to a conference with his other dutiful son, Geoffrey, his horse was shot through the head. Yet he did nothing decisive against them. Richard, on the other hand, struck out right and left, chasing the mercenaries across the frontier into Geoffrey's duchy of Brittany. 'Hunted and wounded wild boar saw we never more furious than he is,' chanted Bertrand in unwilling admiration, 'yet he never swerves from his course.' Soon afterwards the troubadour went over altogether to Richard's side. Thereafter, no doubt, they often sang together ; for Richard was fond of music, and we have a contemporary picture of him in his private chapel, walking up and down the choir, beating time and encouraging the choristers to sing out.

This mad fratricidal war—so typical of that whole mad family !—was rapidly becoming the scandal of the civilised world. Henry II had a numerous progeny, legitimate and illegitimate,<sup>1</sup> and the rumour began to spread among the superstitious that these so-called sons of his were not his sons at all, but the sons of Satan ! The story was believed everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> The most famous of his mistresses was Rosamond Clifford, known as 'the fair Rosamond,' daughter of a Herefordshire baron. She seems to have predeceased Henry, so that the story of her ill-treatment by Queen Eleanor after the King's death can be disregarded.



Richard is even said to have joked about it. But a peace which could never have been won by appealing to the better feeling of the combatants, or even to their common sense, was suddenly brought about through the death of one of them—Henry, ‘the young King.’ The tortured inhabitants of Aquitaine and Poitou heaved a sigh of relief. Richard was now the indisputable heir. There was no longer anything for these unnatural Angevins to quarrel about.

They were soon disillusioned. John, the youngest son, was growing up. A handsome lad of seventeen, he had replaced his dead brother Henry as his father’s favourite : indeed, the King’s love for him, as we shall see presently, amounted to an infatuation. But he was still without a patrimony. Three months after young Henry’s death, therefore, the King summoned Richard and John to Normandy and proposed to them that the former should hand over Aquitaine to his younger brother, while he himself should be recognised as heir to the throne of England with all the deceased Henry’s rights. Such a reshuffling of places had much to commend it on the ground of mere justice ; but it is extraordinary that Henry should have desired to restore a situation which had been productive of nothing but evil, or that he should have failed to anticipate how such a

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proposal of surrender would inevitably be received by any son of his. Richard, who could seldom refuse his father to his face, asked for a few days to think it over: but, after brooding apart for some hours, he mounted his horse at nightfall and rode away to the south, leaving behind a bitter message to the effect that he would never give up his beloved duchy to anyone.<sup>1</sup>

So the fat was in the fire again. Henry sent orders to Richard to give up at any rate some part of Aquitaine, but he refused to cede an inch. John and Geoffrey took up arms with alacrity to enforce the paternal command, and before their father could stop them, began savagely devastating Poitou—until Henry summoned all three sons to England and there strove desperately to bring them to terms. As a final stroke he produced from prison his unfortunate wife, Eleanor, who had been in close confinement for the past eleven years (and was soon to return to it for the rest of Henry's life). Richard was asked whether he could refuse to hand over his duchy to his mother, from whom he had always claimed to have received it. He could not—and, for the moment, there was peace.

Richard, in his new character of the dutiful

<sup>1</sup> As we have seen (p. 18), he never admitted that his father had the disposal of it.

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son, remained quietly at home while the supreme authority in Aquitaine passed in theory to Eleanor, in practice to Henry. He returned to his duchy only when his presence was urgently required there for the preservation of order. The death of his brother Geoffrey, a persistent intriguer, served further to clarify the situation. The only cloud on the horizon was the old question of Richard's marriage to Aloysia of France. Philip Augustus, the new French King, was getting restive and there were frequent conferences between the two kings, in which Henry was as evasive as ever. Richard wished to marry Berengaria of Navarre, and would have done so at once if his father had supported him. As for Henry's attitude in the matter of Aloysia, the only possible explanation seems to be that which was freely whispered at the time—that he had made her his own mistress !

All this time Henry was pulling every string in sight on behalf of his younger son.<sup>1</sup> He is said to have written to Philip Augustus proposing that Aloysia should be given, not to Richard but to John, if the French King agreed, together with the counties of Poitou and Anjou—thus halving Richard's inheritance. Philip

<sup>1</sup> He had already attempted to set him up independently in Ireland ; but John's youthful insolence offended the Irish chieftains, and the scheme fell through.

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promptly sent the letter to Richard, and the latter, in one of his 'white heats of rage,' went off to Paris, and stayed there, ignoring his father's entreaties to return. Instead of going home, he went to Chinon, seized the treasure there and decamped with it to Poitou. Only after many urgent messages could he be brought to meet his father again, when another temporary peace was somehow patched up between them. He was at Tours in November 1187, full of suspicion and discontent. There seemed every prospect that, within the next few months at the most, this interminable family warfare would be renewed.

It was not to be. Suddenly, swiftly and dramatically the whole atmosphere in France and in all Europe changed—and a futile and unedifying period in the career of Richard Cœur de Lion came, none too soon, to an end. Jerusalem was in peril. The news only reached Europe in November ; but it was in the previous July that the army of the Crusaders in Palestine had been utterly overthrown by Saladin at the Battle of Hattin. Thousands of Christian warriors lay dead on that plain near Tiberias where, seven centuries later, Allenby's cavalry were to pursue the flying Turks. Saladin had murdered most of his prisoners. The sacred relic of the True Cross was in his hands. He had taken Acre and

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Haifa and Sidon. Jerusalem itself—though Europe did not know it yet—had fallen on October 3rd. All Christendom thrilled with horror. The aged Pope, Urban III, died of a broken heart.

Richard heard the news one winter night at Tours. Early the very next morning he was with Bartholomew, Archbishop of Tours, and received the Cross from his hands. At last he had a purpose in life ! At last he had found something to do !

## II

### FATHER AND SON

THE admiring biographer of Richard Cœur de Lion is compelled reluctantly to admit that, but for that great inspiration of the Crusades, his hero might never have risen above the ruck of turbulent twelfth-century war-lords, the froth and scum of chivalry. A great soldier he must certainly have become—but a soldier and nothing else. Every time he turned his back his rebellious barons of Aquitaine broke out into fresh revolts. He might have spent the rest of his life suppressing them. He might have wasted his genius—for in the peculiar conditions of twelfth-century soldiering it would have been a waste and nothing else—in improving contemporary methods of warfare. He is known to every student of military history as the builder of Château-Gaillard, the most scientific fortress of its time. He might have stayed at home and built a dozen Château-Gaillards and have gone down to fame as a great military architect—that and nothing else. Or we might even have been

reduced to accept the dull verdict of the Victorian historians who, in their instinctive revolt against the pageantry and romance of history, have vainly tried to persuade the world that the real significance of Richard lies not in his foreign wars but in his 'lavish recognition of municipal life' in England. In fact, we might have been left with a Richard I, but no Cœur de Lion.

The Crusades saved him from that. From the moment when he took the Cross, every action and word of his seemed to have a new quality. It is hardly too much to say that he changed in a night. It was seen then that the fierce Angevin blood could, after all, be tamed to a higher and nobler purpose than the everlasting bickerings in France. It was as though his eyes had suddenly been opened to the real values of life, and the real stature of those he found about him, whether friends or enemies. He was not alone in this, as we shall see : all Europe had felt the tremendous spiritual uplift of the Crusades. For the moment, however, we are concerned only with its effect upon the young soldier who was to become the greatest Crusader of them all.

Old Henry, the father, was in Normandy when the news came to him that Richard had taken the Cross. He said nothing at first ;

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but when his son came to him, full of enthusiasm, he observed cautiously : ' Thou shouldst by no means have undertaken so weighty a business without consulting me : nevertheless, I will not oppose thy pious design, but will so further it that thou mayst fulfil it right well.' Philip of France was in Paris ; but as soon as he heard the news he mobilised his army and threatened to invade Normandy rather than allow Aloysia's promised bridegroom to slip away to Palestine with the knot still untied. The two kings met in a field near Gisors to discuss matters.

And then it seemed that a wonderful thing had happened. The Archbishop of Tyre had come all the way from Palestine to plead the cause of the Crusade ; he was present at this conference, and very soon dominated it. As the assembled knights and squires stood listening to his moving account of the loss of the Holy Sepulchre and the precarious situation of the Christians, desperately clinging to their few fortresses on the coast, they were entirely carried away by his eloquence. Aloysia and her marriage were forgotten, and before sundown not only many of the barons present, but Henry and Philip themselves had agreed to take the Cross. A huge wooden rood was set up upon the field to mark the spot, and so numerous were these new Crusaders that, for



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the sake of distinction, it was arranged that the French should wear red crosses, the English white, and the Flemings green. Henry and Richard were to leave at once, the first for London, the second for Paris, to raise money for the Crusade.

Richard seized the opportunity. He knew that his projected Crusade was impossible without his father's support. He now presented himself before Henry and made two requests—first, that he might be allowed to borrow the money wherewith to finance his expedition to the Holy Land : and second, that the English and Angevin nobles might be made to swear fealty to him as his father's heir and promise not to plot against him in his absence. But Henry, as usual, shuffled : he was himself going to Palestine with Richard, he declared, and would pay all expenses, and therefore the second question did not arise. Richard could draw only one conclusion from this reply. No one believed for a moment in Henry's protestations of zeal for the Crusade. It is true that, soon after this, he went to England and raised large sums of money by means of the famous 'Saladin tithe,' but not a penny of it did he use against Saladin or in the service of the Cross. On the other hand, it had long been growing plainer every day that Henry only waited for an opportunity to disinherit

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Richard in favour of John. Now it was proved ; and Richard, having received his answer, turned his back upon his father for good and all.

Without slackening in his resolution for a moment, he hastened to Poitou and began to make arrangements for shipping to convey him to the East. When Taillebourg revolted against him for the second time, he besieged the place, and admitted the garrison to terms on the single condition that every one of them should take the Cross. When Duke Raymond invaded Aquitaine behind him, he turned and hit back with such fierce intensity that he was at the gates of Toulouse almost before his enemies were aware of it, and was only held off by the personal intervention of both Philip and Henry—the latter of whom went out of his way to repudiate his son's action.

But he had public opinion on his side. When Philip attempted to raise an army, two of his chief subjects, Theobald of Blois and Philip of Flanders, both of them earnest Crusaders, told the French King bluntly that they would not serve. It was plain to them, as now to Richard, that neither king looked first to Jerusalem. At an abortive conference at Chatillon, in October 1188, Richard called Philip 'a vile recreant' to his face.

Yet it was at Richard's suggestion that the

final, dramatic meeting was arranged. It took place at Bonmoulins on the borders of Normandy, in the following month (November). Like all such conferences, it was held in an open field. Under a grey wintry sky, the three armies marched to the appointed place, and there the knights and men-at-arms dismounted and stood on the grass in their armour with their weapons in their hands, forming a wide, silent circle, while the three leaders, Philip, Henry and Richard, advanced into the central space and stood face to face. It was a fateful moment.

Philip spoke first, suggesting that all conquests made in the recent fighting should be given up, so that negotiations might begin afresh. Richard objected to this : he pointed out that most of these conquests had been his, and asked why he alone should make preliminary sacrifices, with no assurance of a return. Then, changing the subject, he turned abruptly to his father and stated his final demands, which were two : (1) official recognition as Henry's heir, and (2) his immediate marriage to Aloysia. Philip at once seconded him. (Is it necessary to add that Richard had interviewed him the night before and had obtained his support for the first proposal in consideration of adding the second ?) All eyes were on Henry. As soon as he began to speak

it was seen that he meant to refuse. He seems to have said little as to the merits of Richard's proposals, which indeed were so reasonable in themselves that it would have been hard for him to object. But he declared that it was impossible for him to accept them in such circumstances, since it would appear that he was acting under constraint.

Richard's gorge rose. 'Now at last,' he exclaimed passionately, 'what I never before would believe looks to me like the truth!'—a plain allusion to the rumours about Henry and Aloysia, and also perhaps to his father's schemes on behalf of John. Ungirding his sword, he turned on his heel. In three strides he stood before Philip of France and—before the onlookers had guessed his intention—fell on his knees, and there, publicly, in the sight of the three armies, did homage to the French King as his 'man' for all the continental dominions of the Angevin house. Philip instantly replied that he would restore to Richard, not Henry, such castles as he had taken from the latter in the recent wars. Henry, we are told, was too astonished to speak.

With that this extraordinary conference broke up, each of the three parties moving off in different directions, while 'all men marvelled.' There was one further attempt at reconciliation—at Ferté-Bernard—when Philip offered to

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give Henry his castles if he would do what Richard asked. Henry again refused, but repeated his counter-proposal that Aloysia should be married to John ! His purpose was now plain for all men to see. Almost without exception the Angevin nobles rallied to Richard's side. Henry fled northward, eagerly pursued by his son. The King had with him Geoffrey, the Lord Chancellor (one of his illegitimate sons), and that stout knight, William the Marshal, with a small body of mounted men.

He was nearly caught at Le Mans, when Philip's men surprised the town, but managed to get away—with Richard still at his heels. What the son's intentions were we do not know, but they cannot have been entirely unfriendly, since he was clad only in his doublet and hose and wore no armour but an iron headpiece. But some of his knights overtook the King's rearguard and an unpremeditated skirmish began. One of Richard's men was unhorsed. He himself cried out to those of the other party : ' Ride on ! Mend your speed ! '—for apparently his only intention was to get his father out of Philip's reach.<sup>1</sup> But William the Marshal, hearing that voice, turned his horse and rode straight at Richard, lance in rest. Richard caught the weapon with his hand, turning its point aside. ' By God's feet, Marshal, slay me

<sup>1</sup> I accept Miss Norgate's view of the affair.

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not !' he exclaimed ; ' I am unarmed.' ' The devil may slay thee,' answered William, ' but I will not,' and recovering his weapon he plunged it into Richard's horse, bringing it to the ground. That stopped the pursuit—which was no doubt William's intention. Richard, as he rose dizzily to his feet, called his knights ' a pack of fools ' and said that they had ' spoiled everything.'

But Henry was finished. He got as far as Chinon, but he was now so ill that he could hardly sit his horse, and he realised that he must surrender. Attendants held him up in the saddle as he rode out for the last time to meet Philip—that ' camp-follower,' as he had contemptuously called him in the days of his pride. Philip, seeing his condition, ordered a cloak to be spread on the grass that he might sit upon it, but Henry angrily refused. While he mumbled his formal agreement to the victors' terms, a violent storm broke overhead, lightning scorched the ground near-by and there was a terrifying clap of thunder. Henry, much shaken, was led back to his quarters in a high fever, when he immediately went to bed and turned his face to the wall, muttering ' Shame, shame, on a conquered king.'

They brought him, at his request, a list of those who had deserted him for Richard and

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Philip, and almost the first name that his eye lit upon was that of his favourite, John—who had prudently hastened to join the winning side. John for whom he had sacrificed all ! The blow finished him. ‘ Now let things go as they will,’ he groaned. Heaven, he said, had taken everything from him, but, he added blasphemously, he would yet rob God of that which He valued most in him—his soul.

It was part of the agreement with Philip that Henry should give his eldest son the kiss of peace, and Richard duly presented himself to receive it. He and Philip had hesitated to believe in Henry’s illness—they had thought that it was only another of the old fox’s tricks—but Richard could hardly doubt it now. As he left the room he heard his father’s voice for the last time—feeble, quavering, but distinct—‘ The Lord grant that I may not die till I have had my revenge of thee.’ Even that prayer was to remain unanswered.

\* \* \* \* \*

The corpse of Henry II had been robbed by his attendants of its jewellery and rich clothing almost before the breath had left his body. But someone had thrown a rough woollen cloth over it, covering the face. It lay now upon a bier in a side chapel at the Abbey of Fontevrault, where the burial was to take

place. William the Marshal, Geoffrey the Chancellor and others stood round it in silence, waiting for Richard, to whom urgent messages had been sent.

A clatter of hoofs outside announced his arrival, and presently his six feet three inches of athletic manhood filled the doorway. There was a long silence : then, at his orders, the cloth was removed and he saw his father's face, in the still majesty of death. There was a stain of blood round the nostrils from the haemorrhage that had killed him. Richard shuddered slightly. Then he walked up to the bier, went down on his knees and prayed, with a sincerity which we must not doubt.

When he had finished he rose and left the chapel, calling to William the Marshal to follow him outside. 'So, fair Sir Marshal,' he said, 'you were minded to slay me the other day, and slain I would have been had I not turned aside your lance by the strength of my arm. That would have been a bad day's work.' William proudly replied that, with a reputation like his, the fact that he had transfixed the horse ought to be sufficient proof that he had never aimed at the rider. 'I bear you no malice,' answered Richard simply, 'I forgive you'—and he sent him forthwith to England, as his chosen representative, to establish order in that kingdom, release his mother,



Queen Eleanor, from her long imprisonment, and set on foot arrangements for the Crusade. All who had been loyal to Henry were similarly treated, while those who had deserted him for Richard were looked upon with suspicion. John, however, was 'received with honour' and 'kindly comforted.' There must have been something very melting about John.

Having conferred with Philip and arranged with him that they should leave together for Palestine in the following Lent, Richard set sail in August for England, taking John with him, and made a royal progress from Southampton to Winchester and thence to Salisbury and London, winning all hearts as he went by his genial, gallant bearing and commanding appearance. English people like a king to be 'every inch a king,' and Richard was undoubtedly that. In language and upbringing he was less English than French; but there was something essentially English in his whole attitude towards life—and not least in his delight in the cheers of the crowd, and in his love of a dignified ceremonial, which his father had unfortunately despised. At Winchester he was greeted by the Queen-Mother, who had governed the kingdom in his absence, and the leading nobles of the land, and there was a glittering procession through the streets of the old Saxon capital to the Cathedral, Richard in

robes of silver and blue, poor Eleanor radiant with smiles, for she had been in prison for the better part of sixteen years and this was one of the great moments of her life.

The Coronation ceremony at Westminster, which followed a few weeks later, was of quite exceptional interest, not only to admirers of Richard Cœur de Lion, but to all students of history, since every subsequent Coronation of a Sovereign at Westminster has been modelled upon it. Within these last few years, a departing foreign ambassador was asked by a London journalist what had impressed him most favourably during his stay in England. He replied, without an instant's hesitation, 'Your ceremonial.' In the records of Ralph de Diceto, Dean of St. Paul's, we may read of the inauguration on September 3rd, 1189, of one of the most impressive of all our English ceremonies.

But this happy occasion was not to pass off without an unfortunate and untimely exhibition of the uncontrolled passions of the times. After the Coronation ceremony, while the new King and his nobles were sitting down to a gargantuan Coronation feast—we are told that, among other items, they consumed nearly two thousand chickens—rumours began to reach their ears of unseemly happenings outside. It appears that the King had given

orders that no Jews, male or female, were to be present at his Coronation and the subsequent entertainments ; and it is clear from what followed that these orders were well advised. Some of the Jews, however, in spite of the prohibition, presented themselves at the doors of the banqueting chamber with presents for the King, and endeavoured to force their way in. An argument with the doorkeepers developed into a quarrel with the crowd that was looking on, and finally into a serious riot. The Jews were chased back to their homes by an angry mob, many of them being overtaken and trampled or beaten to death. Later in the day, as the mob increased in numbers and fury, there was an organised attack upon the Jewish quarter. Without regard to age or sex the Jews were slain. Richard's officers, hurriedly despatched from the banqueting hall, found a situation beyond their control.

The Jews at this time owned something like one-third of the entire movable wealth of the nation.<sup>1</sup> And now when all Christian men who could by any means afford the time were striving to raise funds to get them to Palestine to rescue Christ's Sepulchre, they had taken the occasion to put up their rates of interest and were ruthlessly fleecing the soldiers of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Jews of Angevin England.* By Joseph Jacobs. London, 1893.

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**Cross.** The London massacre was followed by similar scenes all over the country. Says Richard of Devizes :

‘The other cities and towns of the kingdom emulated the faith of the Londoners, and with a like devotion dispatched their bloodsuckers with blood to hell. Something, although unequally, was at that time prepared against these abandoned ones throughout the realm. Winchester alone spared its vermin.’

He goes on to suggest that the City Fathers of Winchester must have been inspired by unworthy motives.

Yet these disgraceful scenes, a blot upon the sunny opening of the reign, serve to illustrate the mad excitement aroused by the Crusade. They explain too, in part, why Richard was now able to set about helping himself to the money he required, in a manner which in other times must have aroused clamorous criticism.

Leaving London behind him, he raged through the country like a hungry lion, out for money instead of blood ; and showing in this new quest all his accustomed audacity coupled with a less characteristic cunning. Many elderly or unwarlike Crusaders, as he well knew, having taken the Cross in the first flush of enthusiasm, were now anxious to back out : by special arrangement with the Church they were absolved of their vows in return for

a substantial payment of money down. Offices and titles were openly sold for cash, even the King's own manorial lands. He deposed every sheriff in England and then put their bailiwicks up for sale—and if they themselves refused to make a bid, he thrust them into gaol. For a lump sum he remitted to King William of Scotland the humiliating terms forced upon him by Henry II when he was made prisoner. The threatened rebellion in Wales gave him an excuse for levying a scutage (payment in lieu of military service) upon his feudal tenants ; but when the dispute was accommodated and the Welsh prince, Rhys, wanted to meet him at Oxford, he refused to go—he was too busy. Like all great men, he had the quality of single-mindedness. Or, as a later chronicler said of him during his Crusade, ‘ Truly never did any man hold half-heartedness in greater contempt.’ He would think and speak of nothing but money. To someone who ventured to protest against a more than usually flagrant sale, he roared his historical reply : ‘ I would sell London if I could find a buyer.’

Yes, and London would have let him do it ! For London, and every man in England, knew that he was not playing the pirate among the rich and stripping the moneylenders for his own benefit. They knew that he would have thought shame to put the money in his pocket and then

leave the Holy Sepulchre to look after itself, as his father had done.<sup>1</sup> They knew that he was as recklessly generous by nature as his father was mean. They knew a man when they saw one.

In the first week of December 1189 Richard was at Canterbury, settling with apparent ease a long-standing controversy between the Archbishop and the Canterbury monks which Henry II, for all his subtlety, had never been able to adjust. He had promised to meet Philip at Vézelay on April 1st of the following year so that they might start out together on their Crusade ; and he had already made all arrangements for the government of England in his absence. Hugh, Bishop of Durham, was appointed Justiciar. He was a tall, handsome, warlike personage, of noble descent. William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, who had been Richard's political adviser in France, was the Chancellor. He was a short, bandy-legged, more or less self-made, aggressive little Frenchman—and the man the King really trusted. (It is significant that the Tower of London was put in his charge.) There were seeds of trouble here.

But a more difficult and dangerous problem by far was how to dispose of John, since it

<sup>1</sup> But it is right to add that Henry had formed a reserve of gold and placed it in the hands of the Templars and Hospitallers, so that there might be funds available in Palestine if he ever went there.

was of paramount importance to secure at least a decent appearance of loyalty on his part during the King's absence. Richard took the line of treating him with almost extravagant generosity. He made over to him all the Crown rights for Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall—which was like giving him a principality of his own ; and though at first he made the wise stipulation that John, while drawing the emoluments from these counties, should promise to keep out of England for three years, he presently took that back and told him he could go where he liked.

This was at Queen Eleanor's request, and it is possible that Richard felt himself safe while his mother held a watching brief on his behalf. Or it may be that Richard's liberality towards John was due to a very proper desire to carry out the known wishes of his father. Personally I prefer to think that he treated John as he would wish to be treated himself, and was characteristically unable to imagine that any man could fail to respond loyally to such generosity. Moreover, it is clear that, like his father, he had a curious weakness for that shifty young prince.

On December 5th, Richard set out for France. He was overtaken at Dover by his illegitimate brother, Geoffrey, who had been appointed Archbishop of York, but had got

into disgrace by allowing the Papal Legate to confirm his election without reference to the King. Richard, as usual, demanded money, and then let him go—only to send a messenger galloping after him to increase the bribe to £2000. Having done that, he embarked and crossed to Normandy, where he kept Christmas at Bures ; but it was noted that ‘there was little singing of *gestes*,’ such as Richard delighted in and had always previously made a feature of these festive occasions. He had more important matters on his mind. At the end of the month he saw Philip, when the two kings again agreed to set out on April 1st. But they soon found that neither of them could be ready in time, and after some further discussion, the date was put off to the following June.

There were innumerable matters to be attended to. There was all the shipping to be arranged for to carry the English Crusading host round to Marseilles by sea. There were horses to be collected in England—many thousands of them, since every mounted Crusader must have at least one spare horse, and these must be conveyed to Marseilles overland, for, in the tiny vessels of the period, more than half of them might be lost if the fleet met with bad weather in the Bay. William Longchamp, who had joined the King in Normandy, was sent back to England to see to this important



matter. And there were one or two troublesome rebels still to be dealt with in France. There was, for instance, the robber baron of Chis in Bigorre, who had distinguished himself by robbing English pilgrims. Richard stormed his fortress and hanged him from the walls.

At last he was free, and on June 20th he hastened to Tours and stood once more before Bartholomew, the Archbishop, from whose hands he had taken the Cross on that early morning in July, two years before, when the Crusading spirit first woke in him. He was now to receive from the Archbishop the pilgrim's stick and staff, and as he stretched out his hand to take them his purpose was as firm as ever it had been. Swinging the stout staff lightly in his grasp, he set it to the ground, and to test it leaned his great weight upon it—with the result that it immediately broke in two ! We are not told whether anyone present took this incident as an evil omen. Richard certainly did not—he probably laughed.

Then he rode gaily through the streets of Tours, with his followers and his long train of horses, while the people of that ancient town, where he was much beloved, waved sorrowful farewells, and ‘the dames and damsels were heavy-hearted,’ but his own heart sang with joy. So he rode towards Vézelay to join Philip and begin the Crusade.

### III

#### A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

RICHARD and Philip rode southward together on their great adventure. Behind them came the long train of their followers—Frenchmen, Angevins, Normans and Englishmen, mail-clad knights and men-at-arms, crossbowmen and the common soldiery, lines of sumpter horses carrying provisions and bundles of arrows or the parts of siege engines, and again more horses for the mounted men. Pennants fluttered everywhere, and there were bright spots of colour all along the line where shields displayed the device of some noble house or the simple Crusaders' cross (white for the English, red for the French). Thus the army wound its way, like a glittering serpent, through all the towns and villages from Vézelay to Lyons. As the two kings rode together, side by side, we are told that they chatted affably, 'discoursing of their great journey.'

They were, in point of fact, an ill-assorted pair : the tall genial soldier, direct in speech and action, his eyes fixed steadily ahead, full

of the new purpose that had now come to dominate his life, glad to leave behind him this gay distracting land of France which called itself (and was) the religious centre of Europe, yet always seemed to hold him back from serving Christ ; and beside him the cool, calculating, long-sighted statesman, timid in action, dreading the impending sea voyage—we have that on contemporary authority—who seemed to ride always with his chin on his shoulder, thinking of his beloved France, seeing the whole Crusade as the means by which he might advance the cause of the Lilies along with that of the Cross. These two had just arranged, and had put their names to it, that they would divide equally between them any treasure or any gain whatsoever acquired by them in their Crusade—an utterly unworkable agreement. For the moment, however, they were brothers. Whatever their motives, they had the same objective in view—Jerusalem. Later on in their Crusade they were to be nicknamed the ‘Lion’ and the ‘Lamb’ ; but now as they rode into Lyons in the July sunshine, there was no cloud on the horizon and no shadow between them. The Lion and the Lamb lay down together that night.

At Lyons they parted, Philip with the French contingent turning off to the left towards Genoa,

while Richard was to continue southwards to Marseilles, there to await the English fleet. The plan of the English Crusade, as Richard had conceived it, now emerges clearly from the meandering chronicles of the time. The first thing we notice about it is its bold conception ; second, and not less important, the careful attention to detail and the organising ability of its creator. Whenever you get a great leader of men, a picturesque personality, such as Cœur de Lion (or Nelson), there is a tendency among dry-as-dust historians to classify him as a mere swashbuckler, an inspired platoon commander, and no more. But whenever you look into the causes of such a man's success, you find that he has prepared his plans even more carefully than his less temperamental rivals.

Richard, as we have seen, had made elaborate arrangements for the collection of his fleet. Ships had been assembled in all the different harbours of England, Normandy, Brittany and Poitou—but the main part sailing from Dartmouth ; and the scheme was that they should arrive at Marseilles at about the same time. They carried the great bulk of the English Crusaders, with some proportion of their horses—though many of these, as we have seen, were taken overland. It is difficult to estimate the size of these ships. The word *esneccæ*, for instance, is usually translated 'smacks,' which

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suggests small fishing-boats ; yet these *esneccæ* were evidently large, round-shaped vessels, specially adapted for the conveyance of war-horses or cattle, and carrying crews of thirty or more men. One ship, of which details have come down to us, had ' three rudders, thirteen anchors, thirty oars, two sails, and triple ropes of every kind ' ; it carried forty war-horses, highly trained and very valuable (as we are specially told), with forty footmen, who would presumably look after the horses, and a whole year's provisions for all of these. Yet the crew of this particular ship only numbered fifteen men.

The captain of such a vessel must have had a responsible task, yet his pay was only double that of a common sailor. In maintaining discipline he would be assisted by the strict regulations laid down by the King before the fleet sailed. Murderers were to be thrown alive into the sea, lashed to the bodies of their victims ; any man who drew a knife upon another was to have his hand cut off ; thieves were to be ' shorn like prize-fighters,' after which ' let boiling pitch be poured upon his head and a feather pillow shaken over it so as to make him a laughing-stock '—they were then thrust ignominiously ashore at the first port. There were fines for lesser offences. Richard signed these regulations himself.

Yet it must have been an inconveniently

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numerous fleet that sailed straggling across the Bay of Biscay in the early summer of 1190, and somehow got to Marseilles, apparently without the loss of a single ship. The plan was that Richard, with the contingent from his French dominions, and with the spare horses, was to meet them at Marseilles and embark with them for the town of Messina in Sicily, which he and Philip had appointed as their first rendezvous. From Messina the combined force was to sail direct to Palestine.

Unfortunately the fleet was late. To begin with, they were scattered by a furious storm soon after entering the Bay, and if Saint Thomas of Canterbury, of blessed memory, had not appeared in person on board one of the ships (on which were travelling 'William FitzOsbert and Geoffrey the goldsmith, citizens of London,' who were witnesses of the apparition) and spoken reassuring words, it seems certain that many must have been drowned or died of fright. Then when they reached the port of Silves in Algarve, in the south of Portugal, they found the town besieged by Moors and the Christian garrison in a desperate plight, and the least they could do, as soldiers of the Cross, was to land and offer their assistance. Some of the Crusaders were delayed here for weeks, receiving Portuguese pay. But on July 24th the main fleet, which had been

sheltering at Lisbon, put out to sea and passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, being then 106 ships in company, 'laden with men, victuals and arms.' Creeping northwards up the coast of Spain, they reached Marseilles on August 22nd, 1190—only to be told that Richard had gone !

He had been 'grieved and confounded at the delay of his fleet'—though he never seems to have reproached them for their 'side-show' in Portugal. But with characteristic impatience he refused to wait for them, and pushed on alone with his household troops down the coast of Italy, escorted by twenty armed galleys. He made the journey in easy stages, going ashore every night to sleep. At Genoa he saw Philip, who was waiting there to embark. At the mouth of the Tiber he was met by representatives of the Pope, who invited him to Rome ; but he refused and went on instead to Naples, where he spent nearly a fortnight, roaming about the countryside like any tourist.

He reached Mileto in Calabria, at the foot of Italy, on September 21st. He must have had many personal adventures in the course of his long journey from Marseilles, and one of them, which happened about now, has fortunately been preserved for us. He was riding through the villages, accompanied only by a single knight, when his attention was

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attracted by an unusually handsome falcon in one of the cottages. A keen falconer himself, he jumped off his horse and strode into the house to look at the bird. He liked it so much that he carried it out with him. The villagers, not unnaturally, objected : a crowd assembled and demanded, with threats, that the falcon should be given up. Richard as vigorously refused. They began to assail him with sticks and stones, and one of them drew a knife, whereupon Richard seized the man and beat him with the flat of his Crusading sword until the weapon broke. Entering further into the spirit of the occasion, he snatched up handfuls of stones and replied to the villagers' fire with such effect that he soon 'overcame' them and was able to ride off safely with his companion. An enjoyable little 'scrap,' no doubt, but not perhaps quite dignified.

He was now on the northern shore of the Straits of Messina, that celebrated strip of Mediterranean blue, the inspiration of the ancient Greeks and the delight of every modern traveller, flowing between the rugged sole of the top-boot of Italy on the one side and the 'beauty-spots' of Sicily on the other. Across the Straits lay the white walls of the town of Messina, where he and Philip were to meet. Though Richard did not know it, Philip was



already there. He had grievously disappointed the good people of Messina by arriving in a single ship and slipping quietly away from the landing place to his lodgings in the royal palace almost unobserved.

Richard, with his instinct for pageantry, could be trusted to do better than this. He crossed the Straits some miles to the north-west of the town, and there joined his fleet from Marseilles, which seems to have been waiting for him—probably by arrangement. On the next day (September 23rd) he sailed bravely into the harbour of Messina at the head of his ships, which were so numerous that they ‘filled all the Straits.’ Says Richard of Devizes :

‘So great was the splendour of the approaching armament, such the clashing and brilliancy of their arms, so noble the sound of the trumpets and clarions, that the city quaked and was greatly astounded, and there came to meet the King a multitude of all ages, people without number, wondering and proclaiming with what exceeding glory and magnificence that king had arrived, surpassing the King of France.’<sup>1</sup>

Whatever Philip may secretly have thought about it, he hastened to meet his fellow-Crusader with every appearance of delight. The two kings fell into each other’s arms :

<sup>1</sup> Trans., Gairdner, *Early Chronicles of Europe*.

‘nor could their gestures sufficiently express in embraces and kisses how much each of them rejoiced in the other.’

It was rather a delicate situation at Messina. The Crusaders were never very popular with the Christian nations of the East upon whom they chanced to billet themselves. (And it must be admitted that their reluctant hosts found ample justification for their inhospitality five years after Richard’s death, when the Fourth Crusade turned shamelessly aside from Palestine and spent its strength in pulling down and despoiling the Eastern Empire of Constantinople, which was Christendom’s chief bulwark against the Turk.) The inhabitants of Messina were divided into two main bodies—the Greeks, who were nicknamed by the crusading chroniclers ‘Griffones,’ and the Italians, who were all lumped together as ‘Lombards’ (they have given that name to one of London’s best-known streets), together with a certain number of ‘low fellows of Saracen extraction.’ They did not like their visitors from the West, and least of all, apparently, the English and Normans. Richard found, to his annoyance, that, while the King of France was comfortably ensconced in the royal palace, those of his own followers who had arrived at Messina before him were encamped outside the walls on the seashore.

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There had been frequent quarrels between them and the inhabitants; some of the Crusaders had been killed in these brawls, and it was alleged that their dead bodies had been outraged. He himself, after landing with his chief barons and being welcomed with such a show of hospitality, was led to a house in the suburbs—also outside the walls. He said nothing for the moment, but he was not pleased.

Tancred, King of Sicily, descendant of Richard's Norman kinsmen who had conquered Sicily a hundred years before, was not at Messina when the Crusaders landed. He was at Palermo; and he had with him there the widow of his predecessor, the Dowager Queen Joan, who was also Richard's sister. At Richard's request he at once sent Joan to Messina, but she brought with her only her 'bedroom furniture,' with a sum of money for her expenses. Now Richard knew that a handsome dowry had been settled upon her by the late king, including, among other picturesque items, a golden table twelve feet long, with golden tripods for the benches, and a great silken tent large enough to cover two hundred knights while they sat at meat. He missed these things, and did not hesitate to tell Tancred so. In the meantime he recrossed the Straits, unceremoniously turned the

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Griffones out of a fortress on the Calabrian coast, and established his sister there under a guard of his own men.

In his camp outside Messina he set up a gallows and hanged upon it without compunction any thieves or murderers, whether of his own following or of the inhabitants, who were found guilty by the courts-martial which he set up. He prohibited food-profiteering in his camp, and regulated gambling, so that no knight or squire was allowed to lose more than twenty shillings in twenty-four hours, and any of the poorer sort found gambling without permission were stripped naked and whipped through the camp. The inhabitants were impressed. They observed with interest that King Philip set up no courts-martial, but allowed any French Crusaders who got into trouble to be dealt with by the local authorities. It was at this time that they nicknamed the two kings the Lion and the Lamb, apparently quite failing to appreciate Philip's motives. Yet, though the air was thick with intrigue, the situation was fairly clear: Tancred, the Norman King, was making a bid for popular support against the bullying invader from the West ; Philip was angling for Tancred's friendship as a useful card to play against Richard ; Richard was taking his own direct course, disregarding them both.

Such was the position on the morning of October 4th, 1190, when the King of England and the King of France, with their principal advisers and a deputation of local notabilities representing the King of Sicily, sat in consultation in Richard's lodgings endeavouring to arrive at some agreement by which unpleasant 'incidents' might be avoided during the stay. The atmosphere was tense. Only the previous day there had been a serious riot outside the English camp to the west of the town. A quarrel between a Crusader and a woman selling bread had stirred up the whole camp like a hive of bees. No doubt they had been mercilessly cheated by the local tradesmen. Now they swarmed round one of the city gates, threatening to break it in. But Richard, springing upon his horse, rode in amongst them, striking out right and left with his staff, and when they saw his tall figure and heard his voice, they gave ground and retired grumbling to their tents.

Now, while the kings and the nobles sat in conference, they were three times interrupted by disquieting news from outside. First came a messenger to say that the English were being attacked. Richard never stirred. Some of the Greeks and Italians went out to investigate, while through the open door, which let in a bright shaft of southern sunshine, could plainly

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be heard the sounds of fierce fighting. But they returned with reassuring reports—‘they lied,’ says the English chronicler. Then came a second messenger to say that the English were being worsted—then a third to say that they were being massacred both in the city and outside. Richard rose and strode out of the building, calling for his horse.

He found the citizens everywhere in arms ; they had even occupied some hills outside the town to the west, overlooking his camp ; many of his followers had been slain ; the walls bristled with armed men. He was greeted with howls of derision. ‘Tails ! Tails ! Englishmen with tails !’—a common taunt against our countrymen in the Middle Ages, origin obscure. Richard surveyed the scene. Then, with a sudden fierce decision, he turned his horse, rode over to his own men, and gave the order to carry Messina by storm. His wrath was so terrible, we are told, that it ‘frightened his nearest friends.’ As he reined in his horse before the Crusaders’ lines, ‘no one dared to look him in the face.’ He shouted a few sentences at them. Were they going to be frightened by these effeminate Griffones ? No one need follow him who did not want to, but all those who did had his free permission to keep any loot they got. He made only one reservation—they must not interfere with the

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French Crusaders and their king, who were quartered inside the town. We can imagine the roar of applause that followed.

Placing himself at the head of a small party, Richard first cleared the hills outside, driving the Sicilians before him like sheep and cutting down many of them with his own hand. Then he returned to lead the attack upon the western gate. Showers of stones and arrows came from the walls, and three gallant knights whose names have come down to us—Peter Torepreie, Matthew de Saulcy, and Ralph de Roverei—were killed. But a man is not called Lion Heart for nothing. Richard first brought up crossbowmen and cleared the walls of their defenders ; then he sent a powerful battering-ram against the gate, and himself followed it closely at the head of his men. ‘The sun shone brightly on the golden shields,’ says Richard of Devizes, ‘and the mountains were resplendent in their glare.’ There was a crash of splintering wood, and the King was through—with ten thousand angry Crusaders at his heels. The usual scenes followed. The houses were pillaged, their defenders were slain, and many of the women were carried off to the Crusaders’ tents. By King Philip’s orders, the larger part of the English fleet, which was still in the outer harbour, was prevented by the French ships from joining in the attack, or the slaughter

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must have been greater. (The crews of the few English ships alongside the quay were overwhelmed by volleys of arrows from the walls.)

Richard is praised by the chroniclers for having put an end to the pillage of the conquered city a good deal sooner than was usual in that stern age. He had accomplished his purpose. In one brisk action, which lasted only a few hours, he had effectually kicked to pieces the elaborate card-castle of diplomatic intrigue which Philip and Tancred were erecting against him. His first step was to take hostages from the local authorities for the good behaviour of the inhabitants towards his men. He then confiscated the property of the two governors of Messina who had fled to join Tancred's Court. And he built a squat wooden tower on the heights commanding the city and publicly christened it—with a touch of grim humour—*Mategriffon*, or 'Kill-Greek.'

Philip of France, from his window in the royal palace, saw the English pennants flying everywhere over the roofs of Messina. He hastened to protest. But his card-playing mattered nothing now. According to one account, Richard answered his protest by threatening to depart for Palestine alone. Anyhow, Philip came to heel, and it was a joint messenger from both Crusading kings who presently arrived at Tancred's Court with



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final proposals for a treaty of peace. It was settled that Richard should receive a lump sum of money in lieu of his sister's dowry ; that the more valuable part of the property taken from Messina after the assault should be returned to its owners—this would presumably include the women!—and that a marriage should be arranged between Prince Arthur (son of Richard's deceased brother Geoffrey) and Tancred's daughter. Tancred gave no more trouble. He even handed over to Richard a letter, which he said he had received from Philip, treacherously proposing a joint attack upon the English. Philip swore it was a forgery, and probably he was right ; but Tancred's action in producing it shows clearly which of the two kings he now looked upon as the more powerful ally.

We next come to two extraordinary incidents which throw a startling light upon Richard's character, one of them displaying him at his best and the other at his very worst. In the house that he occupied there was a private chapel, and Richard, like the good Crusader that he always strove to be, had attended Mass there regularly during the three months that he had spent at Messina. The sacred festival of Christmas was now approaching. One morning, apparently without consulting anyone, Richard sent out messages to the

bishops who were travelling with the English host, inviting them to meet him before the altar in this little chapel and hear his public confession of his sins. They found him in a mood of the deepest self-abasement. Stripping off his clothes he 'fell naked at their feet'—as his father had done before the tomb of Thomas à Becket sixteen years before—and, in a clear voice, blurted out the kind of intimate confession which, as the chronicler observes, most men would blush to relate. 'For the thorns of his evil lusts had grown higher than his head, and there was no hand to root them up.' The bishops seem to have made no difficulty about giving this very human sinner absolution. But Richard, still disturbed in mind, sent to Calabria for Abbot Joachim, a famous expounder of the Scriptures, and made him preach to him and his followers, and 'took much pleasure therein.'

Nor did he relax these religious exercises until Christmas time, when he gave a great feast in his old handsome style, and invited his brother Crusader, King Philip, to be there. Philip came, and no doubt enjoyed himself, for Richard was an excellent host. 'Never,' says a Crusader-chronicler who dined regularly at his table, 'never did I see there a dirty cloth, nor a cup or spoon of wood.' When this Christmas banquet was interrupted

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by a report of the usual free fight between Crusaders and some of the local people, the two kings sallied out, arm-in-arm so to speak, and together quelled the riot.

The other incident is considerably less edifying. Richard was in the habit of taking daily exercise on horseback, accompanied by some of the English and French knights. On Candlemas Day (February 2, 1191) he and his party were returning to Messina when they met a countryman with a load of stout reeds or canes—probably of the thickness of bamboo. In a spirit of harmless horseplay, each knight possessed himself of a long cane, and they began charging at each other as though in a tilting yard, Richard's tall figure prominent in the fray. Among the French knights was a certain William des Barres, who had unfortunately got into the English King's bad books three years before. In a skirmish outside the walls of Mantes, in France, Richard had taken him prisoner—some say in personal combat—but des Barres had jumped on a sumpter horse and galloped off, thus breaking his parole. Such offences against the rules of chivalry were not lightly overlooked.

Now, in this mimic combat, the two men happened to clash together, and Richard's headpiece<sup>1</sup> was broken—for des Barres was

<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps only the head of his improvised weapon.

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a noted expert with the lance. The King charged his opponent again, and this time—as the onlookers noted uneasily—with a purposeful fury quite unsuited to the occasion. Des Barres and his horse were sent staggering, but he still kept his seat, whereas Richard's saddle slipped and 'he came to the ground quicker than he liked.' Thereupon he behaved like a madman. Mounting another horse, he charged the French knight again and again, while des Barres, now thoroughly alarmed, clung desperately to his horse's neck. Bitter words passed. Some of the English knights intervened and tried to lead des Barres away, but Richard roared at them to 'hold off!' He was obviously in the grip of the 'black Angevin' rage, that mood in which his father would fling himself on the floor chewing mouthfuls of straw, or in which his descendant, the Black Prince, would order the wholesale massacre of helpless civilians. At last they were separated. 'Get you hence,' was Richard's parting shot, 'and never appear before me again, for from this moment I am your enemy.'

Des Barres, of course, hurried to Philip's quarters and sought the French King's aid in making peace. But Richard would listen to no one, and it was only on the battlefields of Palestine, many months later, that he was moved to forgive this gallant foe. The whole

incident affords a curious illustration, not only of the darker shades in Richard's character, but of that element of boyishness—or, as we should say, lack of balance and self-control—which was one of the marks of the medieval knight. Richard was essentially a man of his time—of the late twelfth century. And it is not merely fanciful to trace a reproduction of his psychology in the architecture of the period—in those magnificent Norman doorways which still remain to us, with their casual, unrestrained, unordered exuberance, their direct, unsophisticated, almost childlike appeal. Let the reader who wishes to understand the heart of Cœur de Lion pass through the west door of the Temple Church in London with its profusion of decoration and its gay irregular zig-zag moulding, into the dim light of that austere interior where lie in stern silence, row by row, the bronze effigies of Richard's companions in arms who so willingly laid down their lives for a cause that seemed to them sacred. For we are attending the birth of a new civilisation after the long travail of the Dark Ages, and we shall find in it, as in all young things, much to laugh at and much to envy.

Towards the end of this same month of February news arrived that Richard's mother, Queen Eleanor, was on her way out from

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England to join him, bringing with her no less a person than Berengaria of Navarre. Richard at once sent a ship to meet them, for he had always felt the tenderest affection for his mother, and she, on her part, loved him as her favourite son. They arrived on March 30th, and that excellent chronicler, Richard of Devizes, has left us a deft little pen-picture of the two great ladies, whose arrival in the Straits must have caused a mild sensation. Richard's mother cannot have been less than seventy years of age, and sixteen of those seventy years had been spent in prison. Yet her health was unimpaired, and in the transaction of public affairs she was 'indefatigable.' 'A matchless woman,' exclaims Richard of Devizes, 'beautiful and chaste, powerful and modest, meek and eloquent, which is rarely to be met with in a woman who was advanced in years enough to have had two husbands and two sons crowned Kings.'

Berengaria, on the other hand, is dismissed as 'a maid more accomplished than beautiful.' It is fair to add that there was some disagreement on this point. William of Newburgh, another chronicler, thought well of Berengaria's looks. But her moral qualities were her strong point—when Richard of Devizes, a little later in his record, speaks of her as 'presumably still a virgin,' he means no sarcasm—and all

are agreed that it was her intelligence and her discretion that had attracted Richard from the start. His early desire to marry her conceals, unfortunately, no romance—it may even have been inspired by nothing nobler than a desire to escape from Aloysia—nor does her arrival at Messina help to throw any light upon the somewhat obscure subject of Cœur de Lion's 'sex reactions.'

Its effect, indeed, was purely political. Philip, when he heard of Berengaria's approach, at once accused Richard of trying to back out of his promise to Aloysia. Richard replied bluntly that such was precisely his intention, and, to excuse his conduct, he produced evidence that convinced even Philip that his wretched sister had lived in sin with the old king, Henry II. Richard paid Philip a substantial sum of money to be quit of the affair, and promised to send Aloysia back to France when he returned from the Crusade.

His one idea now was to get rid of Philip : he did not want him in Messina when Berengaria arrived. As there were not enough French ships in harbour to convey all Philip's host, Richard lent him some of the English galleys and urged him to make a start for Palestine. Philip, shuddering at the prospect of the sea voyage, reluctantly consented, and Richard had the satisfaction of watching the

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departure of the Frenchmen on the very day that Eleanor and Berengaria arrived.

¶ He himself was eager to be off, but he knew that he must see Eleanor first and hear the news from England. So he hastened to meet her, and mother and son sat down together under the blue Sicilian sky, with the orange groves and the wild-fig trees at their elbows, to consult together about the government of that distant, foggy, turbulent little island, where the heat of men's blood seemed to rise in inverse ratio to the temperature. Eleanor had a disturbing tale to tell : England was up in arms against Longchamp, the dictator-bishop ; undoubtedly there would be civil war unless something were done. Richard listened carefully. Then he sent for his friend, the Archbishop of Rouen, and instructed him to go to England with Eleanor and deal with the situation as he thought best. Just four days after her arrival that wonderful old queen set out cheerfully on her return journey !



## IV

### THE CYPRUS ADVENTURE

THE sparkling waters of the Straits of Messina were dotted with tiny pleasure boats and the beaches were black with spectators, both on the Sicilian and Italian sides, when on April 10th, 1191, being the Wednesday before Easter, the great English fleet, numbering somewhere about two hundred sail, emerged from harbour and stretched away eastward for the Holy Land. In front came three great busses—or dromonds, as men called them in the South—carrying Richard's treasure, his war-chest, which he had been at such pains to collect; a reserve stock of weapons, siege engines and so forth; his sister Joan, now happily escaped from Tancred's claws; and Berengaria, his wife-to-be. In the next line were thirteen troopships, in the third fourteen, in the fourth twenty, in the fifth thirty, in the sixth forty, and in the seventh sixty. About twenty-four of these were busses, the largest kind of carrying-vessel in use; the rest were *esneccæ*. All of them were squat, overbuilt, incredibly unhandy, carrying two

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masts with stout square sails, but no sail of any kind to help them to beat up against the wind. Behind them came Richard with his war-galleys, long, lean, efficient vessels with two tiers of oars, shepherding the convoy before him like a flock of sheep, or, as one chronicler puts it, like a hen with chickens. He was thoroughly enjoying himself, absolutely in his element, rejoicing to find himself 'just as healthy and hearty, brave and strong, on sea as on land'—and laughing, no doubt, to think of cousin Philip's qualms. By his orders all the clumsy transport ships kept close together within hailing distance, so that a trumpet call could be heard through the fleet. How on earth they did it without continual collisions is not explained.

But on Good Friday morning, April 12th, two days out from port, there sprang up of a sudden one of those brief, violent storms for which the eastern end of the Mediterranean is noted still to-day. Immediately the fleet was scattered, and there were scenes of terror on the crowded decks. But not on Richard's ship. Making his men bend to their oars, he shot ahead and, as the light failed, hung a lantern in the stern of his galley to show the way to the rest. He remained perfectly calm, and seemed to wait with quiet confidence for the wind to drop. To those around him he

explained that he relied upon the Grey Monks (the reformed order of the Cistercians), who had promised him their daily prayers in this adventure. 'And,' said he, 'I have done them such great kindnesses that I cannot doubt that as soon as they begin to pray for me God will look down and pity us.' Sure enough, in the middle of the night the wind ceased and there was a calm.

On the 17th he anchored off Crete with the greater part of his fleet ; but there were about twenty-five missing, including the big busses, with the war-chest and the ladies on board ; so he set sail again, full of wrath, to find them. A few days later he was at Rhodes, still without news, but beginning to suspect that they must have run for shelter to Cyprus, and perhaps been detained there by that shifty Greek, Isaac Comnenos, who had recently proclaimed himself Emperor of the island. This Isaac was no friend to the Crusaders ; indeed he was in open alliance with the infidels on the mainland ; and Richard fumed with rage to think that Joan and Berengaria—not to mention the war-chest—might have fallen into such hands.

What had actually happened was this. The three big busses, with several other ships that had parted company in Good Friday's storm, had been blown far to the south, and

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they were still struggling northward to rejoin when Richard made Rhodes. Off the south-eastern coast of Cyprus they were overtaken by another storm, which drove two of the busses ashore ; but the third, with the ladies and most of the money on board, kept out to sea, with the smaller ships. The crews of the wrecked ships were inveigled by the local Greeks into the fort of Limassol (no doubt the one still standing), robbed of their arms and refused food. Finding themselves starving, they broke out and, with a few bows and arrows which they had retained, gallantly fought their way down to the seashore in Limassol harbour, where they were rescued by boats from the other ships.

Emperor Isaac came hurrying from his capital of Nicosia in the northern plain, where the jackdaws chatter on the red-tiled roofs, down the rugged coast road through Larnaca to Limassol, where the motor-buses run to-day. And from Limassol he sent oily messages to Joan and Berengaria, politely inviting them to come ashore. Seeing his troops assembling in prodigious numbers round the town, and not knowing where Richard was, they hesitated to give offence, and at last agreed to accept his kind invitation on the following Sunday afternoon. But on Sunday morning Richard's fleet came in sight, his own

galley as usual in the lead. Anchoring in the entrance of the harbour he soon took in the situation, and sent a messenger ashore to Isaac, demanding reparation for the treatment of the shipwrecked crews. Isaac sent the messenger back with an insulting word, and Richard, as promptly, ordered his men to arms.

Tired as they were from seasickness and the rough journey, the knights and men-at-arms sprang into their boats and pulled for the shore with a hearty good-will, though they could see the whole Greek army waiting for them behind a rough barricade made of timber and household furniture. Some of the Emperor's galleys were drawn up near the quays, but as soon as Richard's crossbowmen opened fire their crews jumped overboard and fled. The leading English boats grounded under a heavy fire from the defenders ; but Richard 'jumped out of his boat into the sea,' and was among the first across the barricade.

The wretched quality of Isaac's infantry now became apparent. 'Few of them were armed,' says Roger of Howden, the chronicler, 'and almost all were unskilled in battle.' They could hardly be expected to stand against the mailed warriors from the West, though for some time they resisted bravely, wielding 'stakes, bits of wood, seats, boxes'—anything they could lay hands on. The fight was soon

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over, and the English archers went ahead through the streets of Limassol, clearing a way for the rest.

Richard, dashing along the foreshore, caught sight of Isaac retiring with his mounted men. 'Emperor ! Emperor !' he shouted, 'come and joust !' Seeing a rough country horse 'with a sack attached to its saddle and stirrups of rope,' he sprang on the animal's back and desperately attempted to pursue his enemy. But Isaac set spurs to his horse and galloped off with his cavalry, nor did they stop until they had put a mile and a half between themselves and Limassol.

Before it was dark, Richard got his horses ashore—he moves so quickly now that it is a little difficult to follow him—and early the following morning he is galloping northward out of Limassol in pursuit of the Greeks. When he came upon them it was hardly yet light. According to one account he drove in their rearguard before him ; according to another he came suddenly in sight of a sleeping camp. The one thing certain is that he had not more than fifty mounted men with him, as opposed to many thousands of cavalry, well armed and mounted, the cream of Isaac's fighting force. 'Come away, Sire,' said a clerk who was with him, 'their numbers are too overwhelming.' 'Get you to your writing business, sir clerk,'

answered Richard, 'and leave matters of chivalry to us.' He had taken the measure of his enemies. Without hesitation he charged down the hill into their midst, scattering them before him like chaff, and, as more Crusaders rode in behind him from Limassol, the victory was soon complete.

Yet it is doubtful whether they killed many Greeks—though they pillaged their 'beautiful tents,' and Richard himself had the satisfaction of capturing Isaac's imperial banner 'all inwrought with gold.' The horses of the Greeks were probably of Arab blood, and the Emperor, in particular, mounted upon his famous steed, Fauvel, seems to have found no difficulty in keeping clear of his pursuers. The Crusaders' horses can hardly have been of the clumsy, cart-horse type which modern artists love to depict. Light animals for ordinary riding purposes were as much appreciated then as now, and Spanish jennets had recently become popular in England. But it is clear from the illustrations that have come down to us that the war-horses were considerably heavier than Arabs. Anyhow, Richard made no attempt to continue the chase.

He rode back into Limassol, meditating his next step. The little town was crowded. Joan and Berengaria had come ashore, and on the following morning three galleys anchored in

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the harbour, bearing Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, who had come over from Acre to seek Richard's aid against a scheme set on foot by Philip of France for putting Conrad de Montferrat in his place. Richard welcomed him, and liked him, and they became allies.

There stands to-day in Limassol a dark, forbidding Norman tower, familiar to every tourist, where dangerous criminals, and those under sentence of death, sit glowering behind iron bars, the Mohamedan Turks jabbering from the Koran, the lithe, dark Greeks pacing restlessly up and down like imprisoned panthers. On the ground floor is a dim, cramped little chapel, much of its limited floor space encumbered by the powerful piers that support the floors above. Here, on May 12th, 1191, Richard and Berengaria were formally united, with all the ceremonies of the Church, in the presence of the leading English Crusaders. Richard had, no doubt, intended that the marriage should take place at Acre, where the presence of Philip of France would have added a touch of dignity, and official approval, to the occasion. He had never meant to land in Cyprus at all. But this hasty affair at Limassol was highly characteristic of his present mood. We remember his confession of moral weakness before the bishops at Messina. No doubt he thought it was time he took a wife.



While the wedding festivities were still in progress, messengers arrived from Isaac, asking for a parley ; and Richard promptly rode north to meet him, leaving his newly married queen at Limassol with his sister, Joan. The meeting-place was 'a garden of fig trees,' somewhere between the Limassol road and the seashore. Isaac came south to keep the appointment, mounted, no doubt, upon his Arab steed, Fauvel—a magnificent bay—and dressed for the occasion in semi-Oriental magnificence, with purple buskins on his legs, in imitation of the Byzantine emperors. Richard, we are told, as he rode in among the fig trees to meet the Greek, was clad in a tunic of rose-coloured samite, with a scarlet cap on his head, and his mantle covered with small half-moons of solid silver ; a great sword with a golden hilt was girt to his side ; his saddle was red, studded with little gold stars, and 'having on its hinder part two golden lion cubs *rampant*, as if snarling at each other.'

This last is a point of some interest, because, as everyone knows, Richard, who invented so much of our ceremonial, was the first to adopt as the arms of England the three golden lions, or leopards, *passant*, which appear in the Royal Standard to-day. In his Great Seal he is shown with these lions on his shield. But in his day, be it noted, men ordinarily spoke of

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the 'leopards of England'—not the lions. Medieval heralds were careless of zoological niceties, and they seem, in general, to have called this particular beast a lion when it was *rampant*, or reared on its hind legs, and a leopard when it was *passant*.

This picturesque meeting among the fig trees came to nothing in the end. Isaac swore fealty to Richard, pledged his island to him, promised to join his Crusade ; and then these two gorgeously appavelled personages got down from their horses and embraced each other with a kiss of peace, Isaac probably quaking in the great bear-hug of the English King. For Richard, now aged thirty-four, was in the full flush of his splendid manhood, confident, domineering, feeling that at this moment of his career he could do anything. It was his hour ; and Isaac was not the only one of those who met him in the East about this time to find him rather an overwhelming personality.

After the embrace Isaac wished to go home ; but they led him firmly to a tent which he at once perceived to be his own—in fact, the very one he had slept in outside Limassol. He was alarmed for his liberty, and that evening he slipped out of the tent, jumped on Fauvel's back, and galloped madly up the northern road till he reached the port of Famagusta,

with its safe encircling walls. Richard, when he heard the news, again forbade his cavalry to pursue—even his own fine Spanish mount could never hope to overtake Fauvel. But he sent his army northward at a leisurely pace, and himself, going on board his galleys, sailed round to Famagusta next day, while other ships were sent to all the northern ports lest Isaac should escape that way.

But Isaac had left Famagusta and fled inland to Nicosia. Richard, therefore, landed, joined his army, and marched forward steadily across that flat, sun-baked plain towards the capital. The Greeks, he noticed, would not face him ; but they hung about his flanks, sending in flights of arrows, and retreating before every charge. It was a style of fighting already familiar to the old Crusaders among his followers, and he himself was to know it well in the course of the next few months. Now, very characteristically, he put himself in command of the rearguard, and looked eagerly for an opportunity of striking back at his elusive foe. Foremost among the Greek horsemen was Isaac himself. The Emperor carried a bow and arrows, according to the old custom of Byzantine cavalry ; and presently he rode in so close that he was able to fire two shots at Richard himself, without, however, registering a hit. Richard's reply was to head

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a sudden fierce charge, which scattered the Greeks in every direction, so that they could not be rallied. But Isaac, on his wonderful horse, as usual got away.

Next morning the inhabitants of Nicosia surrendered, and Richard seems to have done them little harm, except that he ordered all their beards to be shaved off in token of submission !<sup>1</sup> He himself had caught a fever in the plains and had to take to his bed ; but he handed over the command to his new friend, Guy de Lusignan, who knew Cyprus well and soon finished off the conquest of the island. The romantic castles of St. Hilarion and Buffavento, perched upon their mountain-tops to the north, were quickly taken, and so was the stronghold of Kyrenia on the northern coast, where Guy de Lusignan found Isaac's little daughter—whom the chroniclers call the Damsel of Cyprus—and sent her southward to be taken care of by Berengaria and Joan. Isaac's surrender followed. He came to Nicosia and threw himself, grovelling, at Richard's feet, asking for nothing except his life and that he should not be ' put in irons.' Richard promised—and then sent out orders

<sup>1</sup> This would improve their appearance in the Crusaders' eyes, for since the fashion of shaving the face had come in, about the year 1000, beards had been thought effeminate. Yet it is an odd fact that, in Richard's own portrait, he is shown with a closely-clipped beard.

for silver fetters to be made ! There are some unpleasant touches of sardonic humour in his dealings with the Cypriotes. The wretched Isaac was afterwards handed over to the Knights Hospitallers, who conveyed him to the fortress of Markab, in Tripoli, where three years later he died.

In exactly fifteen days this wealthy island empire had been conquered—falling like a ripe plum, so it seemed, into Richard's lap. There was much treasure in Isaac's palace at Nicosia, and there were the well-appointed Cypriote galleys to add to Richard's fleet, replacing those lost in the storm. But what about the siege of Acre ? To unfriendly observers it might well seem that Richard was neglecting his Crusade to go off on a filibustering expedition. Messengers from Philip of France had caught him at Famagusta when he was chasing Isaac, and there had been a brief, unpleasant interview. Philip urged him to sail at once for Acre, and worded his request in such a way that Richard, we are told, 'raised his eyebrows.' A little more, and those messengers might have departed with a flea in their ears.

The insinuation, as a matter of fact, was unjustified. Cyprus was the nearest point to the coast of Palestine, where the Crusaders were at death-grips with the Saracens. It

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was their natural base. Yet Isaac, as long as he ruled the island, had deliberately withheld supplies. Richard, with his soldier's eye, at once saw the importance of this. And now, having got control of the place, he gave himself a further eighteen days there, while he put two Englishmen, Robert of Turnham and Richard de Camville, in charge and organised a regular supply of fresh meat, wheat and barley to the Crusaders on the mainland. Philip should have sent him thanks, not reproaches.

But it was obvious that Richard was under a deep obligation to Guy de Lusignan, and we may note here how handsomely he discharged it. Some time after he reached Palestine, being once more in need of money, he sold Cyprus to the Knights Templars. But the Templars found it more than they could manage, and Richard then handed the island over, as a free gift, to Guy de Lusignan and his heirs. Thus was founded the long dynasty of the Lusignans, who were to reign in Cyprus for nearly three centuries, and build there the gracious abbey of Bellapaise, with many castles and churches, now fallen into decay but universally admired as the finest Gothic monuments in the Levant. The Lusignans left the mark of Latin civilisation upon Cyprus, as the Crusaders did on Palestine ; so that, at Bellapaise and

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elsewhere, may be seen to this day the strange spectacle of grey Gothic ruins entangled among palm trees, with gaily coloured tropical plants clinging to the broken mullions of the windows, while bright green lizards crawl in the sunshine across the dead, stone face of some forgotten Crusader from the West.

So Richard went on board his galleys again, and sailed away to Palestine, saying good-bye for ever to his charming little island, with its variegated scenery, its snow-tipped mountain-tops and pine forests, and its deep, fertile valleys where the peasants feed their pigs on pomegranates. He never saw it again. But among the natives the memory of his brief tempestuous irruption lingers still.

## V

### RICHARD STAINS HIS SWORD

It was a blazing June day, with the summer heat already upon them and the tar blistering between the seams of the ships' decks, when Markab, in Tripoli, the nearest point on the mainland from Famagusta, came in sight, and the English fleet, now numbering over a hundred and fifty sail, turned to its right and began coasting southward towards Acre.

One after another the great coastal strongholds, famous in Crusading annals, passed before them: Tortosa, Tripoli, Beyrout, Sidon, Tyre and Acre, in that order from the north. Richard's galley was in the lead. It appears that some of the others could have outstripped him, but—like Nelson going into action at the Nile—he sent them a curt message to keep back. For he scented some adventure on this voyage, and he was not to be disappointed. Between Beyrout and Sidon they saw a large ship ahead. She was a strange-looking vessel, carrying no less than three masts and apparently hung about her sides with yellow and green tar-



paulins. The galleys, with the aid of their sweeps, overhauled her rapidly, and the nearer they got the less they liked her looks. Had they but known it, the yellow and green tarpaulins (or they may have been hides) were placed there to protect the hull against the Greek Fire,<sup>1</sup> the time-honoured weapon of the Byzantine navy, and their very presence almost proved her a Saracen.

To Richard's hail, a voice from the stranger's deck replied that she was a Genoese bound for Tyre. But there was a man on the Christian galley who knew those parts, and had seen this very ship before, and now came forward and offered to stake his life on her identity. Had he not himself seen her loading at Beyrout, taking seven Saracen emirs on board, with eight hundred chosen Turkish troops, and great stores of food and weapons of war, obviously for the relief of Acre? So it proved. One of the King's galleys, getting even closer in, was fired upon by the stranger. Thereupon they all closed round her. Richard's first sea-fight had begun. The Saracen's high decks overlooked those of the Christians, and she poured down upon them such a blinding shower of

<sup>1</sup> This Greek Fire was projected from tubes and would burn on the water, and its skilful use had repulsed the fleets of Islam from Constantinople again and again. The Germans used a liquid fire, which must have been very like it, in the war of 1914-18.

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stones and javelins and darts from crossbows that the galleys began to give back, and the stranger, with all her sails set, drew slowly ahead again.

Richard, a towering, conspicuous figure upon the poop of his galley, was happily unhurt. 'What !' he shouted, 'will you let that ship get off unharmed ? Shame upon you ! You will deserve to be hanged !' At this some of his men gallantly leaped into the sea, and swimming over to the enemy ship, tied her rudder with ropes so that she would not answer to her helm and immediately lost way. As she leaned over in the light breeze, some of them climbed up her leeward side and tried to board ; but the Saracens lopped off every head that appeared above the bulwarks, flinging back the dead bodies into the sea. The galleys then came alongside and the Christians swarmed on board, slaying many Turks and giving no quarter ; but the enemy rallied and drove them back again, with slaughter, into their own ships.

Richard changed his tactics. He ordered the galleys to draw off and use their rams. One after another they charged the helpless Saracen, crashing their heavy iron beaks into her sides until the water ran in and she began to sink. According to that excellent, honest Arab chronicler, Bohadin (whom we now meet for

the first time), the Saracen commander, seeing that there was no hope, helped to scuttle his own ship, preferring death to surrender. In a few minutes it was all over. The Christians picked up thirty or forty of those who were struggling in the water, choosing the better-dressed. The rest they left to drown. Then they reassembled their convoy of troopships, and the big buss from whose decks the two queens and the little maid of Cyprus<sup>1</sup> had been watching the fight, and proceeded southward once more toward Acre.

There was just one further incident on the voyage—and that an ominous one. Rather than spend the next night at sea, Richard thought he would go ashore at Tyre and sleep there. So his galleys cast anchor in the harbour, and he himself landed and went to see the governor. He was still flushed from his victory at sea, and had indeed every reason to be pleased with himself. If the ship he had just sent to the bottom had got into Acre with

<sup>1</sup> This is the last we shall hear of her. The poor child was sent back to England (without having seen her father), and on Richard's death attempted to return to her native island. But at Marseilles she was caught and compelled to marry Raymond of Toulouse. Raymond put her away, to marry the King of Aragon's sister, and she then became the wife of a Flemish knight, who apparently survived her and caused a sensation by turning up in Cyprus, many years later, and demanding the throne. The reigning monarch, Guy de Lusignan's brother, had him quietly sent home.

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its reinforcements and food supplies, the garrison might have held out for months longer. When the news of the sea-fight was brought to Saladin, he is reported to have exclaimed : ' Oh, God Almighty, now have I lost Acre ! ' Yet the winner of this useful little action was now coldly informed by the governor of Tyre that, by order of the King of France and Conrad de Montferrat (Philip's candidate, against Guy de Lusignan, for the throne of Jerusalem), he was not to be admitted to the town. Richard went back to his ship without a word. Yet we may guess that, as at Famagusta, he raised his eyebrows.

As the Crusading fleet continued its southward voyage on the following day, it was seen that the flat, empty coastal plain on the left was beginning to show unwonted signs of life—strings of horses being exercised or led out to water, small groups of mounted men drawing rein upon the beach to gaze at the ships, and no doubt lifting their spears in welcome. It was evident that they were approaching Acre. Further on could be seen the northern end of the wide arc of the besiegers' lines, rows upon rows of tents, fluttering flags and the gleam of armour, stretching away inland across the plain. Then, quite suddenly, as is the way with Eastern cities, the squat domes and the minarets of Acre rose into view. The fleet

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was approaching from the north, and the famous harbour was therefore hidden from their sight ; for Acre thrusts its nose out into the sea like the beak of a parrot, and the harbour lies under the curve of the beak on the south. There were few sails in sight, for the besieging army had no shipping to speak of (so that the great provision ship whose account they had settled the day before could probably have forced its way in), and Richard's convoy, with its attendant war-galleys, must have made an impressive appearance.

But he himself, leaning on the bulwarks, had no eyes for anything but the great panorama of the siege slowly unfolding itself before him. It was indeed an historic scene. Even in point of time, if for nothing else, this siege would count as memorable ; for it had been begun nearly two years ago, in August 1189, when the gallant Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, who was now with Richard, had come south with quite inadequate forces and boldly thrown his lines round the place. Saladin had replied by occupying the hills behind—Richard could see them plainly from his ship—with so powerful an army that the besiegers were bottled up in their turn and could not move. It was a complete stalemate, and the surrender of the town seemed at first the least likely of solutions. But now, with

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the arrival of the Crusading host, with the lines of circumvallation everywhere completed and strongly manned, and with the harbour blockaded, thus cutting off the supplies by sea, it was clear that Acre could not hold out many months. Saladin had missed his chance. But he still held his ground on the hills, looking for some opportunity to intervene.

Richard landed quickly, and, escaping from the cheering crowd that came to meet him—including Philip of France, Henry of Champagne, Philip's principal lieutenant, the Duke of Burgundy, William des Barres (of the bamboo lance incident) and all the leading Crusaders—started off at once (or so it would appear) upon a tour of inspection of the lines. Around him was a babel of tongues—such a clatter of 'barbaric languages,' says the Saracen historian, Bohadin, that every time that Saladin took a prisoner it was necessary to have three or four interpreters in waiting to translate his words. Here were Frenchmen, Pisans, Genoese, Germans (there would have been more of these if their Emperor, Barbarossa, had not unfortunately been drowned on the way out), Templars, Hospitallers, and the followers of Conrad de Montferrat and other local rulers : in fact, all the nations of the Christian West and all the great Orders of Knighthood were represented in this mighty

effort to rescue Christ's Sepulchre and the Holy Cross.

There was more besides to stir a soldier's heart. Philip, since his arrival on April 20th, had not been entirely idle. He had refused to attempt any general assault before Richard came ; but he had used those six weeks for the purpose of setting up his siege engines, with which he was well supplied, and in battering certain selected portions of the wall. We cannot, unfortunately, fix the exact positions in the line which were held by the various contingents of the besieging army ; even the precise position of the walls of Acre in 1191 seems to be open to doubt. But we do know this : that the land walls ran inwards from the sea in two irregular lines, one beginning south of the harbour, or—to revive our former metaphor—from the parrot's neck, and the other from the back of its head. And they met, and formed an angle, at a point marking the eastern or inland limit of the town. And at this dangerous angle of the walls stood a strong and lofty tower, called the Accursed Tower. And, finally, we know that it was against this tower and the walls in its neighbourhood that Philip's efforts had been directed.

But Philip, though he had started a useful mine, seems to have relied, above-ground, chiefly on bores and rams ; and these, as we

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have seen above, had to be brought close to the walls before they could be used—when the Saracens squirted Greek Fire upon them. The Crusaders had been unlucky with their mangonels, several of which had been set on fire some time before Philip's arrival by red-hot bolts fired from balistas on the walls. Yet Richard saw at once that the occasion called for long-distance fire rather than ramming, and he immediately began to set up the mangonels and balistas which he had brought with him in his fleet. He had also transported from Messina the woodwork of his famous tower 'Mategriffon,' and he now gave orders to re-assemble this and set the tower on wheels, so that it could be thrust against the walls when the moment came for the assault.

As to the English position in the line, we are told that King Philip, in his attack on the Accursed Tower, was supported on the one side (presumably the left) by the Duke of Burgundy, and on the other by the Templars. But in a map of 1291 which has come down to us, the 'Templars' Ward' is shown nearest the sea on this northern side of the town, while, next inland, come the wards of the Hospitallers and the Venetians, and, still further inland—in fact, next to the Accursed Tower—comes a building called the Englishmen's Tower. So it may be that Richard



interposed his English contingent between the French and the others on this side—though, of course, the naming of the wards is not conclusive evidence.

What is certain is that he speeded things up marvellously. The mere fact of his presence put new life into the siege ; bonfires were lit that night all round the great semi-circle of the besieging lines, and the sound of singing and cheering could be plainly heard by the Saracens on the hills. All the Christian chroniclers are agreed that there was a new energy in the attack from the moment he arrived ; but the most remarkable testimony comes from the enemy. A few weeks after his landing, certain Arabs from the city managed to slip past the sentries, as they had often done before, and made their way to Saladin's tent with a message from the besieged. ' They told us,' says Bohadin, ' that they were utterly exhausted, being forced to be on the walls without any rest, to oppose the attacks of the enemy, which had been incessant since the arrival of the King of England.'

Then Richard fell ill ! It was only a few days after his landing. He could hardly have chosen a more unfortunate time. Nor, probably, did he do himself any good by insisting on being carried about from place to place

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so that he might superintend the operations of his beloved siege engines. The besiegers had pushed up close to the walls a great screen, or shelter, made of mantlets, or hurdles covered with hide. It was used as a protection for sharpshooters. Richard insisted on being carried out to it, and here he would sit, shivering with fever, upon his silken litter, with a crossbow in his hands, taking pot-shots at the defenders on the wall. It was characteristic of his thoroughness in military matters that he was recognised throughout the Christian army as one of their crack shots.

His disease must surely have been malaria, though the chroniclers in their vague way give it many names. Acre, even to-day, is regarded as a fever-stricken spot, compared with most of the other cities of the coast. European officials fight shy of it ; the Turks used to send political prisoners to Acre, as the easiest way of getting rid of them ; a great religious leader, Baha'-ullah, died there in exile only the other day. In its immediate neighbourhood the river Belus creeps down into the sea and pools of stagnant water are formed, where the malarial mosquito breeds. Richard's doctors would be unaware of the connection between the mosquitoes and his disease, but, if they had been any length of time ashore, they must have had plenty of experience in fighting this complaint.

Its ravages in the host had been serious. Philip of Flanders, one of the noblest and bravest of Crusaders, had died of it, with many other prominent Frenchmen, and the loss among the foot soldiery, or 'commoner sort,' though beneath the notice of the chroniclers, was doubtless heavier still.

But we must on no account jump to the conclusion that these sick Crusaders of the year 1191 received only crude, unscientific treatment. (We must try to forget that contemptuous modern use of the word medieval.) Rather the contrary was the case. It would be tempting—it is a temptation I can hardly resist—to interject a whole chapter here drawing attention (for the good of our modern souls) to the excellence of the medical arrangements in the Crusade. The Hospitallers were not called by that name for nothing. Their special duty was the care of the sick and the wounded; their hospitals were beautiful buildings; and 'the care of the patients in them was carried to a point of refinement that has made them examples in history.'<sup>1</sup> They perfectly understood the importance of dietary, and (without having heard of vitamins) care-

<sup>1</sup> See *Contributions to Medical and Biological Research* (Hoerber, New York, 1919), vol. 2, chapter entitled 'The Medical History of Two Crusades,' by J. J. Walsh, M.D.; also Gurlt, *Geschichte der Chirurgie*.

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fully studied the nutritive values of different foods. As for the treatment of the wounded, it is quite astonishing to read of the great advance made in surgery about this time. Wounds were not dressed with oil or any witches' remedies, but with clean flax or linen, soaked in warm wine ; for the surgeons of the Crusades had discovered empirically that strong wine was particularly likely to be followed by prompt healing. When an operation was necessary they used anesthetics !<sup>1</sup> Which is more than our quite recent ancestors could say.

The fever's next victim was Philip of France. He must have had it badly, for we hear that his finger-nails and the hair of his head fell off. Yet his recovery was quicker than Richard's. Probably his general health was better ; he did not, like Richard, suffer from periodical attacks of ague ; and we may be quite sure that he took more care of himself when he was ill. Richard, in fact, had knocked himself up rather badly, and was forced for some days to remain in his tent, during which time, as the Saracen chronicler notes, the activities of the besiegers almost ceased.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently ' a combination of mandragora, opium, wild lettuce and hyoscyamus,' which was placed in boiling water for the patient to inhale the steam. My American authority believes that it would be reasonably efficient.

But Philip, as soon as he was on his feet, resumed his attacks on the walls near the Accursed Tower. He had put into use a great mangonel, which he called 'The Bad Neighbour,' but the Turks set up a rival engine on the walls, 'The Bad Kinsman,' and with it managed to knock 'The Bad Neighbour' out of action, time after time. Yet the walls were gradually crumbling under the assault. Richard's mangonels were particularly effective: he had brought with him all the way from Messina some specially selected stones, of a great size and flint-like hardness, and one of these, landing on the walls and splintering in every direction, killed twelve defenders at a stroke. Saladin, when he heard of the feat, had pieces of this stone sent out to him, for his professional interest as a soldier was aroused. Meantime the French miners, though often checked by counter-mines, had at last penetrated to the defences and got under the wall; they waited only for the signal to set fire to their wooden props.

The decision rested with the King of France. Obviously he should have held his hand until Richard was well enough to lead the assault, for everyone in the host knew that the presence of Cœur de Lion would have a tremendous moral effect. Unfortunately, on July 3rd, a great movable screen of mantlets, called a

‘cat,’ which he had constructed, and in which he seems to have taken a fatherly interest, was set on fire by the Turks and instantly destroyed. For once Philip Augustus lost his temper. He ‘began to curse with horrid oaths at all who were under his rule, and to chide them with shameful reproaches for not taking vengeance against the Saracens who had done him such a wrong.’ In the heat of his anger he sent heralds through the camp, proclaiming a general assault for the following day. Of course, the news thus published was conveyed to Saladin, who decided to attack the Christians in the rear at the moment when they were assaulting the walls.

So it happened. But the knights and squires appointed to defend the rear very gallantly beat off all Saladin’s attacks, meeting their assailants on foot and forcing them back with lance and sword. If their companions on the other side had been equally successful, Acre must have fallen that day. When the mine was fired, by Philip’s order, part of the walls fell in, but the breach was not practicable. Only one Crusader ever reached the summit—a certain Alberic Clements—and he paid for it with his life. For the flimsy scaling-ladder by which he had ascended collapsed under the weight of those who followed after, and he was left alone, surrounded by enemies who

‘pierced him with countless wounds.’ (A few days later, King Richard himself, then restored to health, had the satisfaction of picking off with his crossbow a Saracen who was seen to be wearing this dead hero’s arms.)

On the morning after this assault, the garrison proposed terms of surrender, asking only to be allowed to depart with their lives. Philip and Richard refused. The latter, though still far from well, now took charge of operations, and by offering profuse rewards to anyone who would knock down certain sections, or even certain stones, from the walls, he soon made a wide and practicable breach.

The defenders were in despair. They had put up a splendid fight. ‘Never,’ exclaims a Christian chronicler in generous admiration, ‘never had there been such a people as these Turks for prowess in war!’ He must have been thinking of this heroic garrison, not of the relieving force. Night after night, as the crisis approached, Saladin’s own standard had been hoisted on the battlements, as a mute, personal appeal to the Sultan himself, where he sat before his tent at his headquarters on the hill of Ayyadieh, only a few miles across the plain. It is not to be supposed that Saladin did not wish, with all his heart, to save the town. He never personally advanced beyond his headquarters on the hill, but he sent against

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the Christian trenches his nephew and trusted lieutenant, Takadin, with some of his best troops, and, though their attacks were curiously ineffective, the explanation must surely be a military one—that is to say, it must be sought in the quality, equipment and tactics of the troops engaged (a point we shall consider later), rather than in any hesitation on the Sultan's part. It was now too late. The garrison proposed—and the Crusaders agreed—that they should lay down their arms and surrender themselves as prisoners of war, with no promise of anything but their lives, and even that only on the definite condition that Saladin handed over the wood of the Holy Cross, the sixteen hundred Christian prisoners whom he had taken at Hattin, and paid a large fine to the Kings of England and of France, with a smaller sum for Conrad de Montferrat, who had negotiated the treaty.

Thus Acre fell, and its garrison marched out to surrender. Feeling in the Crusading host ran so high that there must have been a massacre if the Kings of England and of France had not issued a joint proclamation threatening dire penalties against anyone who molested the prisoners. These gallant infidels had dressed themselves in their best for the occasion and walked with a defiant air. 'It was only their superstitious rites and their



pitiful idolatry,' writes a Christian chronicler in unwilling admiration, 'that had robbed such warriors of their strength.'

Richard, riding into the conquered town at the head of one of his columns, observed a flag already flying upon one of the towers in that part of Acre which, by agreement with Philip, had been allotted to him. He had only just risen from a sick-bed and was in one of his 'difficult' moods. He asked whose flag it was, and was told 'the Duke of Austria's.' Duke Leopold was sent for and publicly rebuked, after which, at Richard's orders, the flag was removed from its staff and trampled in the dust. The immediate result of this silly, bullying gesture was the ill-concealed hostility of the German contingent among the Crusaders. The further results, which were much more important, will be noted in a later chapter. In fact, Richard's headstrong, impulsive character, which helped to make him the idol of the common soldiery, not infrequently got him into trouble with the bigger men. No one questioned his leadership, but many received wounds to their pride which they could not easily forget.

For the moment they kept it to themselves. It was no use complaining to Philip, for Philip, as everyone could now see, had his fill of the Crusade and was only seeking for a decent excuse to depart. Let us not too lightly blame

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him. He was no fighting man. He had been in Palestine for six whole weeks before Richard's arrival, and those six weeks happened to fall within the period of the *khamzin*, or hot winds from the south, which blow up from the deserts, darkening the sun with orange-coloured clouds of dust, so that life becomes unendurable and, even in a luxurious tent, with servants to wait upon one, food is covered with sand more quickly than it can be conveyed to the mouth. He had never liked fighting for its own sake. The noise of battle, the clash of steel against steel, the whine of missiles through the air, had no charms for him : on the contrary, they both irritated and alarmed him. This new kind of fighting in the sweltering heat, eternally pestered by dust and flies, was the worst of all. He was determined to go home. And since he was a first-class statesman and a second-class soldier, he was, to that extent, right—like many other clever fellows who, in later wars, have sought comfortable appointments at home after brief visits to the trenches. If, when he got back to France, he remembered his fellow-Crusaders still at the front and, as we should say, 'played the game' by them, he was better there than in Palestine. But it was a big 'if.'

Meantime he sent pitiful messages to Richard, begging to be released from his contract, so that

he might go. If he stayed another day in this pestilent country, he declared that he would die. The only important point in dispute between the two kings had recently been settled—the question of the succession to the title of King of Jerusalem. Richard had supported the simple honest soldier, Guy de Lusignan ; Philip, as naturally, preferred his wilier and more influential rival, Conrad de Montferrat, who may perhaps be described as the Ulysses of the Crusade. It had been agreed that Guy, whose claim was much the stronger, should retain the title during his lifetime, after which it was to go to Conrad and his heirs. And Conrad apologised to Richard for locking him out of Tyre ! All such matters were settled ; and Philip further took a mighty oath to behave loyally towards Richard when he got home. ‘ How faithfully he kept this oath,’ says the English chronicler sadly, ‘ all the world knows.’

Richard was frankly horrified at the request. The chief soldier of the Cross was proposing to desert ! As he stared blankly at the four French barons who had brought him the message, he saw that tears were running down their cheeks, for they were ashamed of their king.<sup>1</sup> At first he refused to agree, saying

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted here that nearly all the Frenchmen stayed behind to serve under Richard.

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that it should never be with his consent that Philip brought contempt upon himself and France. He had no thought for the obvious personal advantage of getting rid of a rival : he thought only of the sin. He even offered Philip a half of the ships and provisions and treasure he had won in Cyprus if he would stay. Finding him obdurate, he at last gave way, and Philip went with Conrad to Tyre, and from thence took ship to France.

There was nothing to keep the Crusaders at Acre now that Philip had gone. Their next objective was the town of Joppa (the modern Jaffa), seventy miles further south along the coast, and the nearest port for Jerusalem. There they must establish a sea-base before starting inland on their march upon the Holy City. They waited only for Saladin to carry out the terms of surrender, which the garrison of Acre had accepted on his behalf. He did not do so. He received the Christian messengers with characteristic courtesy ; allowed them to see the True Cross, which—characteristically again—he was keeping with reverent care ; even sent some of them to Damascus to interview the Christian prisoners who were to be set free. But he did no more. The original time-limit of a month had elapsed, been extended, and elapsed again. The Crusaders—not only Richard, but all of them—lost patience.

They felt that they were being played with, and, since they could not possibly take all these prisoners with them on the southward march, there seemed, to their ruthless medieval minds,<sup>1</sup> only one thing to do.

Why prolong the ugly story? On the morning of August 20th (which was the date when the last time-limit expired) the whole army of the Crusaders was seen to emerge from the gates of Acre upon the eastern plain. Led by Richard himself on horseback, they passed the little hill outside the walls, which has ever since been known as Cœur de Lion's hill, and again the hill called Ayyadieh, from which Saladin had retreated when the city fell, and came to a halt just beyond it, facing the further range, only a mile or two distant, from which the whole Saracen army looked down upon them, wondering what this advance might portend. Bohadin has described the scene for us. They saw the Christian ranks deploy into line—the mounted chivalry of the West, the light cavalry, or Turcoples, with their bows and arrows, the solid ranks of infantry. And then from their midst appeared the long train of Moslem prisoners, nearly three thousand of them, bound together with cords. The intention was obvious. Before Saladin could make

<sup>1</sup> And to Napoleon's mind, when he took the same course seven hundred years later.

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a move to the rescue, before he could even renew his interminable appeals for delay, 'the Franks rushed upon them all at once and slaughtered them in cold blood with sword and lance.'

It was a hideous business. We may prefer to assume that the deed was done by a properly appointed group of executioners—but it was hardly less horrible for that. And it is a simple fact that not one of the Christian chroniclers, nor even the Saracens—though they call it a 'martyrdom'—blames Richard for it. Nor does Saladin himself appear to have borne him any grudge. We can never fully understand the medieval mind. We do well to hesitate before we blame the men of a different and in so many ways better age. Yet there are some judgments that must stand independent of time.

Even as the last shrinking prisoner felt the steel at his neck, the Moslem cavalry, which had been approaching at a headlong gallop down the hill, got within range. Again and again they charged, thirsting and howling for revenge. But the Christian knights, strong in the justice of their dreadful deed, repulsed them firmly. By nightfall both parties had retired to their lines, leaving the plain empty but for that lamentable, silent heap. . . .

And there was no sign from heaven—nothing

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to show that a Crusade so begun could never succeed ; or that a king whose reign had been inaugurated by a massacre of unarmed Jews could never hope for the supreme honour of rescuing from pollution the Tomb of the God of Mercy. Richard's hands were stained.

## VI

### THE VICTORY AT ARSOUF

RICHARD's great opponent, Salah - ed - Din, known to the soldiers from the West as Saladin, sat before his tent on the hill of Keisan, watching the Crusaders assembling outside Acre in the plain below him for their long march southward along the coast road to Jaffa. Of all the leaders of Islam who were called upon from time to time to resist these sudden incursions from Europe, he was by far the ablest, and his character the most interesting and attractive.

The first thing to remember about him is that he was neither a Turk nor an Arab, but a Kurd, of the same Aryan stock as ourselves, and a leader of Mamelouks, who were nearly all men of foreign origin, Christian or Persian, having been snatched from their parents in childhood and reared as professional soldiers in the Sultan's service. He was a soldier before he was anything else ; but in uniting for the first time under one command all the scattered Moslem states of Egypt, Arabia and



Syria, he had shown much more than a soldier's ability, and must have seemed to his contemporaries to have closed the door finally against any further Crusades. It was a strange turn of fortune's wheel that brought against him, after all, the finest leader the Crusades ever produced.

Bohadin, his friend and chronicler, has given us some insight into his mind, and it is clear that he felt curiously little resentment against the invaders. He could understand and respect their motives. Indeed he understood the whole spirit of Western chivalry as no other Easterner ever has, before or since. While still a young man he had become friendly with a Christian knight, Humphrey of Toron, and had listened with interest while his friend explained to him all the elaborate ceremonial attending the induction of a candidate for knightly honours, the long hours of vigil before the altar, the purification of spirit, so that a knight must be humble, unselfish, strong to defend the weak. 'By God,' exclaimed Saladin, 'this is beautiful!' And he became a knight himself—though how the religious difficulty was got over is not explained—and in later years, during Richard's Crusade, was at pains to procure, with the help of Christian friends, a similar honour for his favourite nephew.

We must remember that the relations be-

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tween Christians and Moslems in Palestine were, in general, much pleasanter in the twelfth century than in our own times. They seem to have felt a certain kinship—and they were united in a dislike of the Jews. The true believer did not spit out the word *Nazrani* in hatred and disdain, as he later learned to do. Many Franks spoke Arabic, and some of the Latin towns on the coast scandalised the Pope by minting coinage for local use upon which appeared the name of the Prophet Mohamed and an Arabic date. Nor is it merely fanciful to guess that the English Crusaders got on specially well with the Arabs in time of peace ; for even to-day there is clearly some affinity between the two races which, once or twice in every generation, draws some distinguished Englishman out into the desert, and perhaps into the bosom of Islam itself, with a perfectly genuine feeling—though some may laugh at it—of having found his spiritual home at last.

But the relations between Saladin and Richard Cœur de Lion are something apart—surely one of the prettiest episodes in history ! That Saladin, who loved and tried to understand the West, should have won the admiration of the Crusading chivalry is understandable. But that Richard, an uncompromising Westerner through and through, who never wanted to know the East and never would

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have gone there but to save the Cross ; one in whose nostrils the name of Mahound stank like Satan's : that he should have been equally admired in the East—and more so, for he became a tradition there—that is the kind of conquest that only the greatest among us achieve. In the streets of any Near Eastern town may be seen to this very day parties of strolling Arab players performing on a rough stage, in their own vernacular, a crude folk play about Saladin and Cœur de Lion. And, to show how the clean spirit of that chivalric relationship persists, the subject is always the same—the alleged visit paid by Saladin in disguise to Richard's tent near Acre, when the English King lay ill, in order that he might cure the malaria with a touch of his magic talisman. Probably it really happened. It is certain that Saladin sent courtly messages and gifts to his sick foe. He loved Richard, without ever having seen him : he knew that this was a man after his own heart, with his own contempt for money, his own gay courage and delight in lusty deeds. Anyhow the tradition has an essential truth. And our point, for the moment, is that little men do not leave behind them traditions of this kind.

Saladin had just suffered a reverse—one of the most serious of his career. But he thought he saw his opportunity now. He knew that

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long coast road from Acre to Jaffa—every inch of it. It was now past the middle of August, the temperature was somewhere between 90° and 100° in the shade, and he knew that the Crusaders, or most of them, were quite unused to the climate, and were, moreover, heavily clothed and armed, in the manner of the North. They would have to carry with them on their seventy miles' march all their baggage, siege engines and provisions ; for he would see to it that they would get no supplies *en route*. He himself with his army would keep to the foot-hills parallel with their line of march, and his light horsemen and mounted archers would continually invest and assail their sweating ranks like clouds of murderous mosquitoes. There were one or two places—notably Arsouf, between Cæsarea and Jaffa—where wooded hills came right down to the beach, and the assailants could take cover by the very side of the track. He did not think the Crusaders would get further than that.

But Richard was about to launch the greatest military enterprise of his life, and there was genius in everything he did. He ordered his army in three long columns of route. Nearest the sea, on that firm, level surface where the motor-cars chase backwards and forwards between Acre and Haifa to-day, went the long train of his baggage transport, mules

and horses and perspiring foot soldiers—for his infantry must take it turn-about to act as beasts of burden on this march. Next came his mounted men, knights and squires and men-at-arms, the mainstay of every medieval army since 1066, the irresistible chivalry of the West (little dreaming as they rode of the day when the English longbow would reduce them to second place). Inland of these again came the column of infantry, forming a continuous line, but with the crossbowmen in the outermost rank, and so arranged that, at a given signal, their ranks might be opened to allow the cavalry to charge out into the plain and relieve the pressure of the Saracen attacks.

The Templars and Hospitallers, with the locally-raised Turcoples, or mounted archers, took the van and rear on alternate days, as knowing the country. But sometimes Richard had the van. In the centre of the column went always the Royal Standard, which had been mounted upon wheels, and was the rallying point for the army. Bohadin says that the enemy could see it towering above the Christian ranks, 'as high as one of our minarets.' Here the army surgeons must have been stationed, with their dressings and instruments, for we are told that all the sick and wounded were carried to the foot of the Standard for attention. Round the Standard, in front and

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behind, rode the English and Norman mounted men. Richard, as he watched his columns file past, must have felt that he had given Saladin something to think about.

He himself was mounted on that wonderful steed, Fauvel—one of the few famous horses in history—which he had taken from the wretched Isaac in Cyprus, and had brought with him for this campaign. More than six feet in height and powerfully built, so that a whole crop of legends had sprung up about his feats of physical strength, he cannot have been an easy man to mount. But Fauvel evidently carried him with ease. As he stood up now in his stirrups to address his men, his red hair tumbled back beneath his square casquet, his chain-mail carried as easily as if it were a silken vest, he must have seemed to them more god than man.

But not every knight or squire had Richard's physique, and an important point to note about his arrangements is the skill with which he conserved the energy of his mounted men. It was very necessary. The usual military harness of a knight in the last years of the twelfth century consisted of a *gambeson* or quilted body-garment of leather or linen stuffed with wool, and above it a long-sleeved hauberk of chain-mail, with its attached hood pulled up over the head and covering the mouth. Under

the hood, to protect the head, was a skull-cap of iron. And on top of all this was clapped the cone-shaped headpiece, with its strange decoration of wooden or leather fan-cresting, as shown in Richard's Great Seal. The headpiece covered the knight's face down to his neck, leaving only a slit for his eyes—which would, at any rate, make it difficult for the flies to get at him! Underneath all this suffocating armour was worn a long linen tunic, the skirts of which may be seen in Richard's Seal dangling about his ankles. In his right hand the knight bore a long wooden lance; strapped to his side was a heavy sword, broad-bladed and square-hilted; on his left arm hung his shield, and in his left hand he would often hold also a sort of spiked hammer of iron, called a *martel de fer*. The light-armed Saracen horsemen<sup>1</sup> must have laughed as they watched these clumsy figures ploughing their way, like heavily-armed battle-ships, across the baking hot sand. If so, they laughed too soon.

Richard, very properly, decided to march in short stages. On the first day he marched only two miles, on the second no more; on the third day he rested; and on the fourth he got into Haifa, the next port southward, after

<sup>1</sup> To the Crusaders they seemed 'almost unarmed and weaponless.'

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a record day's march of eleven miles. At Haifa, which they found emptied of its inhabitants, they rested again and obtained fresh supplies from their fleet, which was following them down the coast. In fact, this policy of short leisurely marches was only rendered possible by their undisputed command of the sea.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it was that policy that had saved them from extinction. Scarcely had they cleared the suburbs of Acre when the Saracen light horse, descending from the hills on the left, line after line of them as far as the eye could see, had begun to close in. As they came within range their arrows darkened the sky and their fierce yells of 'Allah ! Allah Akbar !' echoed along the seashore. Saladin's generals were instructed to look for a gap in the line, into which they might thrust the spearhead of their attack and so break the column in bits. Had the Christians marched at anything like a normal pace, such gaps must certainly have occurred, and often. But their extreme slowness saved them, as Richard had doubtless foreseen. Only once did the assailants find an opening. Soon after crossing the river Belus, the Crusaders had to pass what the chroniclers call a

<sup>1</sup> And Allenby, in 1917, advancing in the opposite direction, seized this same advantage of provisioning his troops from the sea.



‘defile,’ but was, in fact, we may assume, a narrow causeway (still existing) between the swamps at the head of the Belus and the Kishon swamps. Almost immediately a gap showed in their ranks and some of the Saracens dashed in ; but the Christians closed up again so quickly that the enemy were squeezed out, after plundering a few baggage wagons.

In the meantime they galloped up and down those slow-moving ranks, never daring to charge, but pouring in quiverful after quiverful of arrows. Their shooting was not very effective. We must remember that these mounted archers carried light bows and drew back the string only to the breast : the day of the powerful English longbow was yet to come. The infantry, who formed the outermost or inland side in the Christian column, bore the brunt of these ceaseless volleys, and bore it very stolidly. Apparently they all wore chain-mail, and above it some quilted or leathern garment as a further protection. Bohadin, the Saracen, who was a witness of the scene and admired their imperturbable courage, observes : ‘I noted among them men who had from one to ten shafts sticking in their backs, yet trudged on at their ordinary pace, and did not fall out of their ranks. But they,’ he adds, ‘shot at us meanwhile with crossbows, which struck down horse and man

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among the Moslems.' In fact, the Christians always had the better of any small arms exchange.

But the pressure became intolerable. The French knights, who were riding in that part of the line where the gap had occurred (and were chiefly to blame for it),<sup>1</sup> charged out again and again, led by William des Barres and others, and forced the assailants back. But the Saracens, after galloping to a safe distance, always returned. At last a message was sent to Richard. Hurriedly collecting a party of his own followers, he came thundering down the line to the rescue. This time the enemy were caught. Richard plunged into the middle of them, 'slaying them right and left with his sword,' and he chased them all the way to the foot-hills, leaving many corpses behind him on the plain. After that they behaved more warily.

One pleasant feature of this skirmish must not be forgotten. The gallant conduct of William des Barres having been brought to Richard's attention, he took the occasion to forgive his old enemy, and the two became friends.

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that, at this date, the protecting column of infantry on the inland side was not continuous. According to some authorities, the formation, described above, of three parallel columns was not strictly adhered to until the army reached the open plain beyond Haifa.

The Christian army plodded on. Every village they passed was empty, and some, by Saladin's order, had been levelled with the ground, while fresh-water streams were dammed or more or less successfully concealed. But the fleet was always in sight, and two days out of Haifa it came inshore and landed fresh supplies—a lengthy operation if we can believe the chronicler who puts the strength of the army at three hundred thousand men! Also they sent off their sick men to the ships and discarded much superfluous baggage. They eked out their supply of fresh meat by eating the horses which were continually being brought down by the enemies' arrows.

They did all their marching by day. Every evening they formed a strong camp, so well fortified that the Saracens never once attempted a night attack. And each night, as the weary Christians settled down to rest, the voice of one of the King's heralds would be heard, as he moved in the darkness among the tents: 'Sanctum Sepulchrum, adjuva!' (Help us, Oh Holy Sepulchre!) And, says the chronicler, 'on hearing these words the whole multitude would take up the cry, stretching out their hands to heaven and, with copious tears, praying God for aid and mercy.' Twice more would that solemn cry be raised before silence descended upon the Crusaders' camp—silence

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and the deep peace of a warm Eastern night, broken only by the voices of the sentries or the distant howling of the Syrian jackals.

The decisive battle was fought on Saturday, September 7th, 1191. The Crusaders had emerged from the half-ruined town of Cæsarea, and were toiling slowly across the sand dunes in the direction of Jaffa, now about thirty miles away. They had thrown off, with comparative ease, another attack by the Saracen horse, and were advancing slowly but with dogged determination. But Saladin, holding the inside line, could always cut across and get in front of them. He had done so now, and was lying across their path at Arsouf.

We may judge of his mood by his treatment of such prisoners as were taken. Without distinction of age, sex or rank, he had every one of them executed, often with cruel tortures. Bohadin tells us of one Frankish knight, in particular, who won the sympathy of all beholders by his fine figure and bearing. 'I never saw a man so well made, with such elegant hands and feet, and such a distinguished appearance.' Yet this knight was a liar, for, when asked about the massacre at Acre, he said that Richard alone was to blame for it. In spite of that, Saladin had his head cut off; and his daughter, who was brought before the Sultan on the following day (surely it was a

mistake to have allowed any women on this march!), was sent to join her handsome father in the grave.

Saladin's determination to force a battle is easily understood. He saw, no doubt, that his former harassing tactics, though very annoying for Richard and exhausting for his men, were having an even worse effect upon the morale of his own followers. They were acquiring a habit of retreat—a sort of tip-and-run method of fighting which achieved nothing. Some time or other they must stand up to these heavily-armed Crusaders, if victory was to be won. That time, he judged, had now come. He had chosen the ground with his usual skill. Arsouf was the only point on the line of march where wooded hills came right down to the water's edge. It is true that, judging from the look of the country to-day, the 'Wood of Arsouf,' as the chroniclers call it, must have consisted mainly of scrub oak; but it gave enough cover for Saladin's purpose. He could burst out on the Crusaders wherever he chose.

But if he thought to effect a surprise he was reckoning without his antagonist. Richard had foreseen every move. He had been wounded slightly in the side by a javelin during the fighting outside Cæsarea (though he paid no heed to that); the heat was intolerable; his men were dropping on all sides from fatigue

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and from the fever which they contracted when they stopped to rest or water their horses at the streams; the Templars complained that so many of their horses had been disabled by arrows that they could scarcely organise an effective charge. In fact, Richard's difficulties were increasing every day. There was probably no man in either host who more eagerly welcomed a decision.

Now, on the morning of September 7th, he issued a proclamation confidently informing his men that the battle would take place that day. They must look to their arms. He put the Templars in the van; next came the Bretons and the Angevins; next the Poitevins, commanded by Guy de Lusignan; then the English and Normans with the Standard; then the Hospitallers, holding the rear. The order was the same as before: the infantry column inshore, then the cavalry, then the baggage next the sea. But Count Henry of Champagne led a mounted flanking guard, inshore of the infantry, to give warning of the enemy's approach. As to the numbers engaged, the best estimate is probably 300,000 Saracens and 100,000 Crusaders.

As soon as the Crusaders were fairly entangled among the trees, Saladin launched his attack. He seems to have approached in crescent formation, with his centre held back

for the final assault, but with the right horn of the crescent, whether intentionally or not, considerably in advance of the left, and thrown out so widely as to envelop the Christian rear. Sir Charles Oman<sup>1</sup> thinks that the idea was to attack the rear so heavily as to bring it to a halt, when a gap must have opened between it and the Christian centre, and the rear might then have been cut off from the rest and overwhelmed.

In any case, the rearguard, composed of the Hospitallers, bore the whole brunt of the battle in its early stage. The crossbowmen on the outer flank and the infantry covering the hindmost of the baggage wagons suffered terribly. They would not halt, but we are told that they marched backwards, always facing the enemy, and that their progress, in consequence, became alarmingly slow. After the mounted horsemen came a charge of Saracen infantry, armed with sword and mace, and these, forcing their way in to close quarters, slashed and hewed at the mail-clad Crusaders with a noise, says the chronicler, like the battering of countless hammers upon blacksmiths' anvils.

The ranks of the Knights Hospitallers seethed with helpless rage. They sent message after message to Richard begging for permission to

<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*. Revised edition, 1924, vol. i. p. 312.

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charge. Half of their horses were already down, they said—might they not charge out from amongst the infantry before it was too late, and flesh their lances in this mob of insolent paynims?

But Richard firmly refused. ‘My good Master,’ he said to the Master of the Hospital who had galloped up to him, ‘it must be endured.’ He realised the primary importance of getting the whole Saracen army within range of the cavalry charge, which he knew must be his decisive effort; and as yet only their right wing was irretrievably engaged. He had placed two trumpeters with the vanguard, two with the centre and two in the rear, and had ordered that the infantry should not open their ranks until, at a given signal, all six sounded the charge. That moment was not far off now. Already the left horn of Saladin’s crescent was in touch with the Templars: soon they would be at grips all along the line.

But the Hospitallers could stand it no longer. There were cries from among them of, ‘Why do we not give rein?’, ‘We shall be held as cowards for evermore!’, ‘The longer we delay the greater our shame!’ Suddenly, as one man, they wheeled their horses and, calling upon St. George, dashed out through the broken ranks of the foot soldiers, led by their



own Master, a Norman knight named Baldwin de Caron, who was Richard's personal friend, and others. Count Henry of Champagne, with his French flanking guard, joined also in the charge ; and, as the movement spread, the Englishmen in the centre, the Earl of Leicester, the Earl of Dreux, James de Avesnes, the Bishop of Beauvais—and after them the Poitevins, Bretons, and Angevins—all became engaged.

Richard's carefully-thought-out plan was wrecked. But he acted with his usual decision. Ordering the trumpets to be sounded immediately, and calling upon the Normans and English to follow him, he galloped to the rear and hurled himself into the fray behind the Hospitallers, cutting 'a wide path' through the enemy as he went. The Saracens went down on every side, and the Christian infantry, following behind the knights, lopped off the heads of all the infidels on the ground—for they had learnt from their enemies the unpleasant custom of collecting heads as a Red Indian does scalps.<sup>1</sup>

As the combat receded among the trees, great clouds of dust arose, so that the Christian knights, charging hither and thither, and already half-blinded by sweat under their heavy headpieces, often failed to distinguish

<sup>1</sup> Hence, no doubt, the popular inn sign in England of the Saracen's Head.

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friend from foe. It seems probable that the scrub oak, which had been so useful to the Saracens as cover, had now the effect of checking and breaking up their retreat, so that their losses were greatly increased. Some of them, in their flight, climbed up the taller trees and hung there yelling for mercy—only to be shot down by crossbowmen. Bohadin, galloping towards the Saracen left, under the impression that he might be safer there (for he was no fighting man), found his friends on that wing also in headlong retreat before the Templars.

Yet the battle was not quite over. As the knights and men-at-arms drew slowly back towards their own line, there were several counter-attacks. There was an emir with a great yellow flag, and other yellow flags at the head of each of his squadrons, who charged almost to the foot of the Standard ; but William des Barres drove him off, and Richard, with the reserve, completed his discomfiture. The King of England, being mounted on ' his peerless Cyprus steed,' Fauvel, often got dangerously far ahead of his companions ; but his tall figure and his well-known voice inspired such terror in the enemy that their one idea was to get out of his long reach.

At last it was finished. The Christians reformed their ranks and continued their march, without opposition, as far as the little town of

Arsouf, where they spent the night and the whole of the following day (Sunday). Scouts reported 7000 Saracen dead. For a distance of half a mile from the roadside the corpses lay thick, with arrows, broken swords and shields, and all the litter of a medieval battle-field. Richard's losses were comparatively slight, but among the dead was that gallant knight, James de Avesnes, who was found lying within a circle of Saracen corpses. He was given a handsome funeral at Arsouf.

The strategical results of this famous battle were curiously slight. Saladin quickly rallied the flying remnants of his beaten army, and when the Crusaders marched out of Arsouf on the Monday morning on their way to Jaffa, he appeared from among the hills in considerable force and harassed them with his light cavalry all the way. When they finally limped into Jaffa, where they were to make contact with their fleet, he drew off in sullen defiance and took post at Ramleh, guarding the Jerusalem road.

But the moral effect was undeniable—and no one understood it better than that wise warrior, Saladin. According to Bohadin, he withdrew into himself, refusing to listen to a word of comfort, and finding relief only in personal attention to the wounded, and in ordering the instant execution of the solitary

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Frankish prisoner taken by his army that day ! Well he knew that never again could he bring his horsemen to face the Crusaders' charge. As far as cavalry were concerned, he was condemned, for the future, to what was little better than guerilla warfare. For Richard in particular the Saracens began to feel an almost superstitious dread. Their grandfathers had told them of the weight of these Western swords. Robert of Normandy, in the First Crusade, was said to have split a Saracen's head to his very shoulders ; and Geoffrey of Bouillon, in single combat, had ' calmly cut his adversary in two across the middle with a single stroke, so that the upper half of the man fell to the ground, leaving the lower half still sitting on the horse.' But Richard's magnificent *élan*, and the irresistible moral effect of his presence in any part of the field, was something different from these fabled feats of physical strength. We are told that his enemies fled before him ' like sheep.'

Even Saladin himself was sportsman enough to express open admiration for his principal antagonist. To some Christian envoys, a few months later, he declared ' that his regard for King Richard's valour and nobility of character was so great that he would rather lose his land to such a man, if lose it he must, than to any other prince he had ever seen.'

## VII

### RICHARD LOOKS UPON JERUSALEM

THE resounding victory at Arsouf represents the climax of Cœur de Lion's Crusade. Though he had won so handsomely, the immediate results of the battle were slight—as we have seen. Richard himself seems to have realised, in the course of the next few weeks, that this Crusade, to which he had dedicated his life, was already beginning to lose its driving force. He never lost heart. It was as much as any man's life was worth to suggest that he had done enough and might now follow Philip back to Europe. Indeed, there is an heroic note in the history of his abortive operations against Jerusalem during the next twelve months which should be a source of inspiration to every schoolboy while our civilisation lasts. Adversity, and the constant anxiety of ill news from home, served only to heighten his personal courage. A soldier's death in the service of the Cross seemed a fair prospect to him. Many stories of his exploits have been preserved for us, and they come

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from both friends and foes ; but we may think of him, during those last few months of his Crusade, riding up and down before the enemies' ranks, as he often did—he, the King of England !—challenging any infidel among them to come out and fight ; and not a man ever moved.

As the Christian army rested among the fruit trees of Jaffa—figs, and grapes, and pomegranates, 'and huge almonds with which the branches were overladen everywhere,' and the dark green and pale gold groves of the famous Jaffa oranges which still give a distinguished setting to the town—it was inevitable that there should be a certain relaxation. The fleet had arrived ; ships were plying regularly to and fro between Jaffa and Acre ; and soon it was noticed that the numbers of the Crusaders had perceptibly decreased. Many of the poorer knights who had come to the end of their financial resources, and still more of those who were merely discontented or faint-hearted, had slipped away to the comfortable security of the northern port, so that in the second week in October, Richard himself had to sail to Acre and round them up. It was a discouraging sign.

Returning to Jaffa, and riding out with a few companions on a hawking expedition in the open country, Richard very nearly brought

his Crusade to an abrupt termination. He saw a party of mounted Saracens, and immediately pursued them ; but they led him into an ambush, where he must have been taken alive but for the devotion of William des Préaux, who shouted out ' I am the King,' and was seized instead. Again, on October 29th, he encountered another hostile patrol, and defeated them after a brisk engagement. There was no holding him back on these occasions. On November 6th he rescued a party of Templars who had got into difficulties ; and a few weeks later we hear of him, in the Crusaders' camp, displaying before his admiring followers ' the many Turks' heads that he had cut off.'

In the meantime he was negotiating with Saladin—or rather, with the Sultan's brother, Safadin, for Saladin, like Richard, had many malcontents in his camp, and would not face the odium of publicly consorting with the English King. Richard and Safadin dined together in a handsomely-appointed tent, had Syrian singers in to amuse them, and, in short, behaved like brothers—to the great scandal of the more seriously-minded section of the Crusaders. Richard's followers could hardly be expected to understand that in these negotiations with the enemy he was perfectly insincere—was, in fact, acting with a subtlety quite foreign to

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his usual methods. In the first place, he was playing for time while he organised his advance on Jerusalem. In the second place, his hand had been forced by the treachery of Conrad de Montferrat, who had sent messages to Saladin proposing to make a treaty with him and attack his fellow-Christians.

Richard countermined with a bold offer to give his sister, Joan, to Saladin in marriage and retire himself to England, leaving them to rule the country together. Saladin never took this mad proposal seriously—he said as much to Bohadin—but the emirs on his council were completely dazzled by it, and induced him to reject Conrad's overtures. Then Richard said that Joan was making difficulties, and that he would have to write home first and get the sanction of the Pope. In fact, while the Crusaders supposed that their simple-minded soldier-king was being twisted round the fingers of these wily Orientals in an atmosphere of sherbet and Syrian dancing-girls, he was really playing his cards with remarkable acumen.

Early in December Saladin evacuated Ramleh and fell back on Jerusalem. Three weeks later the reorganised Christian army advanced as far as Beit Nuba, at the foot of the Judæan hills. On the way a party of Saracens, who had designed to ambush the rearguard, were sur-



prised and chased across the plain. Richard, mounted on Fauvel, easily outdistanced the other pursuers and, overtaking the enemy, charged and unhorsed two of them before any of his friends could get up to his assistance. He was in splendid health and spirits, and we can hardly doubt that, left to himself, he would have carried out his original intention and continued the march from Beit Nuba across the Judæan hills to the Holy City itself.

But at Beit Nuba all sorts of difficulties arose. There was, first, the weather. The Palestinian winter, always unpleasantly wet and cold, was particularly rigorous in the year 1191-92; the tracks were knee-deep in mud, mountain paths were converted into rushing streams, and the Crusaders, who had shivered with malaria all the summer, now shivered equally with cold. Moreover, the Templars and Hospitallers, who knew the country, were against any further advance, and produced so many military reasons that Richard was impressed and ordered a conference to be held at a place called Natroun. (It is a remarkable coincidence, by the way, that when next an English army invaded Palestine, in the year 1917, Natroun should have been pitched upon as Corps Headquarters, and Beit Nuba as Divisional Headquarters, during the successful advance upon Jerusalem.) It was pointed out to Richard at Natroun

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(January 6th) that there were really two Saracen armies in being—the light armed troops in the hills, and the powerful garrison of Jerusalem under Saladin's command. If he brushed past the first, it would certainly attack him in the rear while engaged with the second. If he surrounded the city entirely, his line would be too thin ; if he assailed it on one side only, the garrison would continue to receive supplies.

Richard called for a map. 'Draw me a plan of Jerusalem,' he said, 'for I have never seen it.' Some of those present hastened to make a sketch for him, showing the strong defence of the city, set upon its hills, with the surrounding deep valley. He pored over it for a long time, asking many questions. Clearly he was shaken. It was, perhaps, the bitterest moment of his life. Only three months before he had been writing home to England from Jaffa expressing the confident hope that 'by twenty days after Christmas we shall, through God's grace, receive the surrender of Jerusalem.' But now, for the first time, doubts as to the ultimate success of his Crusade began to creep into his mind.

His next words prove it. Looking up from the map, after a long silence, he said : 'It will be impossible to take this town so long as Saladin lives and the Musulmans are at peace

one with the other.' With that he rose to his feet and gave orders for his army to face about and march southward down the coast to Ascalon, the only port not yet in his hands. Jerusalem must wait.

So Richard turned back. It was not a habit of his ; but on this occasion the arguments of the local people who knew the country and had fought over the ground appeared to be incontrovertible. How many of such fatal decisions do we find scattered about the ironical pages of human history—occasions when just a little more faith and resolution, even if apparently against all reason, might have crowned some gallant adventure with the triumph it deserved! Had Richard but known it, Saladin's difficulties were no whit less than his. He also was suffering from the weather, and there were many 'defeatists' in his host. Since his failure to save the defenders of Acre, he found his emirs not unnaturally reluctant to join any garrison—even that of Jerusalem itself : they could not trust him not to leave them to their fate. It is quite within the range of probability that if, on January 6th, the English King had decided to push on across the hills, in defiance of his advisers, he might have won through to the Holy Sepulchre itself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Christian chronicler, author of the *Itinerary*, holds it to be 'beyond a doubt.'

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Snow and hail blew mercilessly in their faces all the way to Ascalon ; and many of the sick, who fell by the way, must have perished from exposure had not Richard established a rest-hospital for them at Ramleh and sent mounted messengers back along the route to pick them up. In this way he recovered some of the popularity he had lost by his decision to retreat, which had been greeted with loud lamentations by ' the common folk.' But the morale of the army was definitely weakened. At Ascalon, which the Saracens had abandoned and where Richard himself took a hand in rebuilding the walls, the grumbling never ceased. The weather was so bad that the ships, which had been ordered to meet them there, could not get into harbour, and for eight days the army practically starved.

Then came the quarrel with the French. France, who was to produce, half a century later, the most pious and unselfish of all the Crusaders in her king, St. Louis, contributed to this Crusade of Richard's more than her fair share of self-seeking, earthy-minded adventurers who began to lose heart as soon as they found they were losing money. Hugh of Burgundy, who had taken Philip's place, had been left short of funds wherewith to pay the French Crusaders. At first he borrowed from Richard, and when that source of supply dried

up he quarrelled violently with the English King, and departed to Acre, whither the remaining Frenchmen presently followed him.

At Acre they found the Christians there fighting among themselves—indeed there was a skirmish in progress at the moment of their arrival between the Pisans (who were Richard's supporters) and the Genoese (backed by Conrad de Montferrat). The French sided with the latter, and, upon the arrival of Conrad with his fleet from Tyre, the Pisans were besieged in the town. But they repulsed their assailants with mangonels and balistas, and managed to hold out until Richard arrived hurriedly from the south and, by his personal influence, succeeded in making peace.

He returned to Ascalon 'very sad and ill at ease.' It is said that when the Frenchmen left, he had personally followed them along the road 'praying them with many tears to stay a little while at his expense.' Now he saw the vital necessity, if the Crusade was to be saved, of coming to terms with Conrad about the succession to the throne of Jerusalem. So he called a conference of all the chiefs who were still with him, and put before them the simple choice—Guy or Conrad? It is a remarkable tribute to the latter's ability that, though many of those present disliked him and probably all distrusted him, yet when it came

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to this final choice they gave him a unanimous vote.

Richard accepted the decision with a good grace—though he loved the simple Guy—and deputed his relative, Henry of Champagne, to carry the news to Tyre.<sup>1</sup> When Conrad heard of the realisation of his ambition, for which he had fought and intrigued so long and had even sold his soul—for he was again in negotiation with Saladin—he was beside himself with joy. Throwing up his arms to heaven, he was heard to pray thus :

‘ Oh Lord God who hast created me,  
Thou who alone art the true and tender  
King, grant I beseech Thee that, if Thou  
deemest me worthy of ruling Thy kingdom,  
I may be crowned ; but, if otherwise, may  
I never attain that honour.’

A few days later he was assassinated. Emissaries of that mysterious ruler, the Old Man of the Mountains, sprang out upon him from a doorway as he was returning from dinner ‘ very happy and mirthful ’—or, as some say, as he went to dine—and stabbed him to the heart.

Thus was Richard’s most dangerous enemy removed from his path. (There were some, of

<sup>1</sup> As we have seen above (p. 93), Guy was given Cyprus instead.

course, who were ready to accuse him of complicity in the crime, but no one seems to have taken this ill-natured gossip seriously.) And the general acceptance of Henry of Champagne as Conrad's successor must have lifted this whole troublesome question off his mind.

Yet he had enough to worry him. There was bad news from England, contradictory, it is true, in regard to details, but leaving little doubt that John's attitude was now openly hostile. William of Ely, Richard's friend, had been turned out of the Government, and Richard, when he heard the news, sat brooding apart—for he loved his brother, and hated to believe the worst of him. He relieved his feelings with more head-hunting: the Saracens in the neighbourhood of Ascalon felt the weight of his arm, and he nearly lost his life in a desperate encounter with a wild boar. Thus the winter passed, and the weather grew milder—but not Richard's mood, for every messenger from home brought worse news than the last. There was a general impression in the host that he would presently abandon his Crusade and return to England.

Richard was at first unaware of this; but one day at the beginning of June, as he sat in the door of his tent, preoccupied with his thoughts, he observed one of his English chaplains, William of Poitiers, walking up and down

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outside the tent weeping bitterly. Asked for the cause of his tears, this man threw himself on his knees before the King, told him of all the 'defeatist' talk that was going on, and begged for some reassurance. Richard heard him out in silence, and when he had finished, walked into his tent without a word. But next day he assembled all the leading Crusaders and publicly announced that 'Not for any messenger or evil tidings, nor for any earthly quarrel, would he depart from them or quit the land before next Easter.'

On June 10th he was back at Beit Nuba, offering to serve in the ranks under any other commander who would undertake the siege of Jerusalem, though he himself, as a soldier, was convinced of its futility. On June 23rd, at the Battle of the Round Cistern, he intercepted and defeated the reinforcements from Egypt which were on their way to join Saladin. It was a scrambling affair, of no military interest, but it greatly increased Saladin's difficulties. His emirs were now openly refusing to remain in Jerusalem if the Christians laid siege to the place. Richard knew nothing of this. Saladin, for his part, was almost equally ignorant of the dissensions in the Crusaders' ranks, where the Frenchmen, who had returned from Tyre, made a point of camping apart from the rest and, in general, behaving like unwilling



allies. The intelligence service on both sides seems to have left something to be desired.

But Richard's plan of campaign for the summer months had to be settled, one way or the other. It was now the end of June, and everyone realised that little could be done in the winter. The ensuing months might be occupied in either of two ways: (1) in an advance on Jerusalem, or (2) in consolidating the position on the coast. Richard had neither the time nor the resources for both. As a Crusader he preferred the first, as a soldier the second; his heart drew him one way, his head the other. For he had been convinced by the military arguments put before him at that conference at Natroun six months ago, and it was part of his character that once he formed an opinion he never changed it.

Beit Nuba was the scene of this final decision, as it had been of the first. The Christian army had been encamped there for about a week—a period of much anxiety and continual conferences, enlivened only by occasional skirmishes with the Saracen light horse. There is a story that Richard, pursuing some of the enemy, and, as usual, riding far ahead of his companions, chased a mounted Saracen to the top of a hill and there transfixed him with his lance, bringing him heavily to the ground. As he raised his eyes from his fallen foe, he saw

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the Holy City, for the first and last time, far away in the valley below. According to another account, one of his knights, who had gone a little ahead, cried out to the King : 'Sire, Sire, come here and I will show you Jerusalem.' But Richard, so says the tradition, 'caste his surcoat before his eyes all weeping, and said to our Lord : "Fair Lord God, I pray Thee that Thou suffer me not to behold Thy Holy City, since I cannot deliver it from the hands of Thine enemies."'

The final council was held on the night of July 2nd. In January one of the principal difficulties in the way of an advance was the flooded state of the country ; the complete absence of water, at any rate in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, was a principal objection now. Otherwise the arguments remained the same. It is impossible to judge at this distance of time, but the impression is hard to resist that many of the local leaders were not over-anxious to reach Jerusalem, being satisfied with things as they were. Richard, it is clear, never thought himself strong enough. So the order was given to retreat, and the Crusaders retired once more, and for the last time, to the coast.

One last exploit of Richard's remains to be recorded before we close this brief history of his Crusade. In many respects it was the most brilliant of all. He had sailed north to Acre,

intending to make preparations there for an attack upon the northern port of Beyrout. It was a place of little consequence in those days ; but Richard was determined, since he could not take Jerusalem, to leave behind him in Christian hands a complete chain of powerful fortresses, blockading and holding the whole coast, so that the Saracens in the Holy Land would be left, so to speak, besieged. Then, some day, he meant to return and renew the assault. There is no doubt about that. It never entered his mind to leave his work undone.

But his watchful opponent, Saladin, hearing of Richard's departure for the north, immediately advanced from Jerusalem and threw himself upon Jaffa in overwhelming force. He had brought his siege engines with him and, in spite of the efforts of a strong garrison, he soon made a breach in the wall. He appears to have set his heart upon a spectacular victory, if only for the sake of his army's morale. In fact, of course, he had saved Islam ; but he could claim no successes in the field, and, to the common soldier, it seemed that Richard had won every trick. After four days' desperate fighting, the Saracens broke in and proceeded to pillage the town, while the garrison took refuge in the citadel. There they were soon reduced to extremities and, in response to Saladin's

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demands, agreed to surrender, on promise of their lives, if they were not relieved in three days.

Urgent messages went to Richard at Acre. Early on the morning of August 1st, the appointed day, the hard-pressed garrison at Jaffa heard a trumpet call, and saw the first of Richard's ships outside the reef of rocks which, to this day, makes access to the quay impossible for any but small rowing-boats. Richard, as a fact, had only two or three vessels with him, for the rest had been scattered by a storm. As his boats pulled in to investigate, their crews could see a mob of Saracens on the beach, howling defiance at them ; the Christian flag still flew above the citadel, but they doubted whether the garrison yet held out. While they rested on their oars, hesitating, and exchanging a few shots with the infidels ashore, the morning wore on ; and about noon the weary defenders of the citadel, in response to Saladin's repeated demands, began to file out across the draw-bridge, surrendering their arms.

Our old acquaintance, Bohadin, acting on Saladin's orders, was superintending the surrender. It can hardly have been with his consent that some of the more bloodthirsty Saracens began to murder the prisoners and throw their heads into the moat. Anyhow—whether for this reason, or because the number

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of ships outside had now increased and could be plainly seen under the noonday sun—the procession abruptly ceased, and the Christians, crowding back into the citadel, prepared to sell their lives dearly. It was at this moment that a certain priest who was in the garrison, after commending his soul to God, very gallantly jumped from the walls to the beach below, and, landing in the shallow water, was fortunately picked up by one of the boats and conveyed to the King's galley.

Richard's ship, we are told, was painted red, its awnings were red, and there was a red flag at the mast-head. He himself was standing on the poop, a towering figure. 'Is there anyone left alive?' he asked. 'Yes,' said the priest, 'in front of yonder tower are they hemmed in and like to perish.' With a mighty roar, Richard ordered his galley to be pulled in, and flinging himself overboard, half-armed as he was and with the water above his middle, he forced his way ashore and dashed up the beach, calling his men to follow him. Ten minutes' vigorous fighting cleared the quays, and, before making another move, Richard had every entrance to the harbour blocked with improvised barricades.

Then, without a pause, he stormed through the streets. The discipline of the Saracens was extraordinarily slack, for he found them still

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busy looting—though they must have heard of his landing—and was able, with his small party and the aid of his strong right arm, to cut his way through to the walls of the city, where he hoisted his flag as a signal to the Christians in the citadel. These immediately sallied out, and the disorganised enemy, caught between two fires, were butchered like sheep and the survivors chased far beyond the city gates.

Richard followed them, and, for some reason, pitched his camp on the plain outside. Whereupon Saladin, with his usual resiliency, returned to the attack, and three nights later very nearly succeeded in recapturing Jaffa and ‘mopping up’ the Christian camp. But Richard, with only six horsemen, galloped through the streets, bluffing the enemy into mistaking him for a strong garrison, while his men outside worked all night to fortify their camp.

A confused engagement on the following day resulted in the flight of the enemy, with small loss to either side. They simply would not stand against Richard. It is recorded that, on the morning of the battle, he rode out five or six times between the armies—not mounted on Fauvel, for that paragon among horses had unfortunately been left behind at Jaffa—and, shaking his spear at the infidel ranks, challenged any of them to come out and fight him. In

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the course of one of these perambulations he became hungry, it being then about noon, and called for food. Whereupon several Saracens ran forward to supply him. And he stood there, quite coolly, eating his luncheon, between the armies, between the East and the West—unconsciously uniting them, like Kipling's hero. Surely a glorious figure of a man !

But the climate had him at last. He had spent his energy with reckless prodigality, like the great Crusader, great adventurer, great sinner and great hero that he was. And now he fell so seriously ill that he knew he must give it up. The first necessity was to conclude a good treaty with Saladin. Without the inspiration of his leadership, he saw that he could not trust any one of these coast towns to hold out against a determined siege. But he needed to find them there, as jumping-off places, when he returned for his second Crusade. So he reopened negotiations, and it was agreed, after a great deal of talk, that Ascalon should be dismantled and that the Christians should be allowed to keep all the other ports.

The treaty was to last for three years. Both sides were sick of fighting, and it is a question whether Richard or Saladin signed the agreement with a better will. But we know that, when the document was brought to Richard

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for his final signature, he was too far gone in fever to read it. But he reached out from his sick-bed and shook each of Saladin's envoys by the hand.

They carried him to Haifa, and he made his convalescence there. He had already sent the two queens, Joan and Berengaria, to England. And on October 9th, 1192, he himself went on board ship and turned his back on Palestine. That evening, as his vessel slipped gently westward over a starlit sea, Richard, resting on deck in his invalid chair, turned his face towards the country he was leaving. 'Oh Holy Land,' he exclaimed, 'I commend thee to God : may He of His mercy but grant me such space of life that I may bring thee aid ; for it is my hope and determination, by His good will, to return.' Undoubtedly he meant every word of that.

It would be interesting to know whether he gave a last thought to his great antagonist. 'Jerusalem can never be taken while Saladin lives,' Richard had said. And, acting on that conviction, he had turned back from his task, and missed—as it turned out, for ever—the opportunity of his career. Yet long before he got back to England, while he was still languishing in a German prison—in fact, on March 4th, 1193—Saladin died of typhoid fever, and the united Saracen empire, which



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he had so laboriously constructed, went to pieces in civil war. Had Richard been still in Palestine then—and always supposing that his health had held out—he could have taken Jerusalem as easily as he had seized any of the coast towns. It is one of history's little ironies that he should have been held prisoner by a fellow-Crusader at the time.

## VIII

### RETREAT, IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH

THE essential part of Cœur de Lion's career was over, though he did not know it. But it was still very far from finished on its merely spectacular side. Consciously or unconsciously, he was still the world's greatest showman ; and we learn without surprise that his method of returning to his own country was wildly different from any that could have been contemplated by a more conventional king.

There was no reason whatever why he should not have travelled home 'long sea'—that is to say, by the Straits of Gibraltar and the Bay of Biscay. He loved the sea and the life on board ship, though he had not been very lucky with his weather. Yet he preferred to make a bargain with a party of disreputable pirates to take him up the Adriatic Sea and land him secretly at the town of Ragusa. There is no possible explanation of this conduct except the sheer love of adventure which was the breath of life to him, and makes

him utterly different from every other English monarch.

He had originally intended to land at Marseilles, but when his friends pointed out to him the madness of putting himself in the power of his principal enemy, Philip of France, he turned aside to Corfu. There he saw the pirate galleys lying off the coast, no doubt in search of plunder, and had himself rowed out to them. They greeted his boat with a volley of arrows, but he stood up and harangued them, and when they discovered who he was, they willingly took him on board. At Ragusa he made no attempt to preserve his anonymity, but, on the contrary, began to rebuild the monastic church, and is remembered there as a local benefactor to this day. Putting to sea again, his ship was driven ashore and wrecked at an obscure fishing village not far from Venice.

He must have realised that all the leading feudal magnates in those parts were either dependants of the house of Montferrat, or allies of Leopold of Austria, or both ; and he can hardly have forgotten the unconcealed hostility of the German contingent in Palestine. Among his travelling companions was a certain Baldwin de Béthune, and Richard decided to represent himself as Baldwin's friend, one 'Hugh the merchant.' But in applying for

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passports for the party to the local ruler, Count Mainard of Gorizia, he, with characteristic imprudence, enclosed a present of a ruby ring of such obvious value that Mainard's suspicions were aroused, and, though he gave them their passports, he sent a troop of horsemen after them and captured most of the party. 'Hugh the merchant,' who was well mounted (though he had apparently left Fauvel behind him in the East), managed to get across the frontier, but was chased again by the ruler of the next state (Mainard's brother), and eventually reached a little inn in the neighbourhood of Vienna in a condition of exhaustion.

Once again, with his usual careless arrogance, he gave away his identity by sending his servants into the town to make expensive purchases on a large scale. And this time he was caught. Leopold despatched soldiers to surround the inn, and himself appeared at the door, demanding Richard's surrender. It is said that the King of England was crouching over the fire, disguised as a cook, turning capons on a spit. The device almost succeeded. But the same person who had disclosed his presence to the Duke was able to recognise him now. There was nothing for it but a graceful surrender. Richard gave up his sword to Leopold, and was forthwith removed,

under guard, to a castle in the mountain near Krems, while Leopold sat down to write a triumphant letter to his overlord, the Emperor, proclaiming the valuable capture he had made.

The Emperor, Henry VI, was delighted at the news. He was contemplating a Crusade himself, but he also had designs on Sicily, and Tancred's alliance with Richard incommoded him there. Also Henry of Saxony was causing trouble at home, and Henry was Richard's brother-in-law. So the Emperor was pleased, and he said as much in a letter to Philip of France, who was the most pleased of them all. Philip got in touch with Richard's brother, John, and the two of them offered 50,000 marks of silver on Philip's behalf, and 30,000 on John's, if the Emperor would keep Richard in prison until Michaelmas, 1194; or, if the Emperor preferred it, they offered to pay 1000 pounds of silver for every month of Richard's captivity; or, again, 150,000 marks of silver if the Emperor would hand his prisoner over to them—in which case his fate was left unspecified. Thus did these most Christian monarchs welcome home the returning Crusader!

But any alliance between France and Germany could only be temporary. Richard and Henry were natural allies, and Henry—an unpleasant character—seems to have kept the

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English King in prison with no higher motive than to make as much as he could out of him by way of ransom. There was a meeting between the two at Ratisbon on January 6th—Richard cheerfully defiant, Henry cold and calculating and asking for such conditions (for instance, armed assistance in a conquest of Sicily) as he must have known to be absurd. On Tuesday of Holy Week Richard, who had now been removed from Leopold's custody, was brought before the Emperor again, and formally accused of plotting the death of Conrad de Montferrat, treacherously negotiating with Saladin for the sale of the Holy Land, breaking some alleged agreement with Henry himself, and so forth. But the Emperor was accompanied on this occasion by his leading barons, and Richard's frank and gallant bearing, not to mention his record as a Crusader and his kinship with many of those present, seems to have won all hearts. Half Germany was in revolt at this time, and Henry had no desire to raise up more enemies. So he suddenly changed his tone, posed as Richard's friend, flung his arms round his neck and gave him the kiss of peace, while 'the bystanders wept for joy.' But as soon as the meeting broke up he sent his prisoner off to a still stronger fortress at Triffels, in the mountains on the borders of Lorraine.

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Richard, in view of his personal reputation as a fighting man, was honoured by a specially selected guard of burly German soldiers. Even when he went to bed at Triffels, these mountains of flesh would sit round him in a solemn circle, with their great swords girt to their sides. It was a ludicrous situation, and Richard, who, for all his faults, was never lacking in a sense of humour, seems rather to have enjoyed it. During the daytime he would compete with his colossal guards in feats of strength, at which he was no mean performer. In the evenings he would amuse himself by drinking them all under the table. It was perhaps fortunate that he had these sources of entertainment, for his general circumstances, with his brother intriguing against him, his enemy, Philip, already invading Normandy, and the negotiations for his release dragging on interminably, were enough to drive any ordinary man to desperation.

But events were moving in his favour. Many of Philip's own subjects refused to join him in stealing the lands of an absent Crusader ; the Pope threatened excommunications ; the Norman barons, almost without exception, rejected John's bribes ; John himself was afraid to come out into the open, being intimidated by his strong-minded mother, Eleanor ; and even the Emperor Henry began to see that a free and

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friendly Richard would be more useful to him than a Richard in prison. The amount of the ransom was fixed at 150,000 marks, and, to the general astonishment, the first instalment was brought over from England before the end of the year. On December 20th, just a year after Richard's capture, the Emperor announced his intention of setting him free on January 17th, 1194. Only Henry's prevarications—everlastingly going back on his word and trying to add new conditions—delayed that happy event.

The fact is that the sentimental heart of England had warmed to Richard in his absence. He was just the sporting type of king that English people adore, but seldom get. That he should apparently have preferred to live in France was only an added attraction. The whole nation had fallen in love with him. Official deputations came hurrying over, beginning with the two abbots of Boxley and Robertsbridge, who 'wandered over all Alemannia' till they found him, and finishing with his friend, William of Ely, who was able to reassure him about the ransom—which, indeed, was subscribed in record time.

But the most famous of all these messengers, one whose adventures have passed into a tradition, seems to have travelled in an unofficial capacity. Blondel, the minstrel, was



the first to get in touch with the captive king. There is no reason to doubt the old story, charmingly told by a Frenchman seventy years later, of how Blondel set out upon his self-appointed task and sang and played beneath many a lonely tower, until among the mountains at Triffels he heard the lusty voice of the Lion Heart answering his refrain from a barred upper window. It is delightful to know that such things have really happened. But they only happen to men of Richard's kind.

The Emperor released him on February 4th, 1194, and sent him homewards with imperial passports, and violent threats against any who should detain him or fail to make restitution (this was aimed at Philip) of the castles they had seized in his absence. Richard moved at a leisurely pace in the direction of Antwerp, consorting on the way with the many new friends he had made in Germany while a prisoner, and with those who had stood up for his rights in Flanders. At Cologne, where he stopped to attend Mass, the Archbishop not only entertained him handsomely, but preached in the cathedral from the text : ' Now know I of a surety that the Lord hath sent His angel and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod '—a plain indication of the popular feeling about Henry's conduct.

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Richard made full use of this sentiment, with that touch of adroitness which he could sometimes display in diplomatic affairs. It is not too much to say that 'on his way back to England he knit together that system of alliances which was not finally broken till Philip Augustus won his great victory at Bouvines in 1214'<sup>1</sup>—twenty years later. And it is interesting to speculate as to what might have happened in the history of Europe if the decision at Bouvines—one of the world's decisive battles—had gone the other way, as it not improbably would have done if Richard had been there. A strong and loyal English contingent, under a dashing commander, might have changed the issue that day.

He made his entry into London on March 16th, amid stirring scenes of popular enthusiasm. There were a few malcontents to be put down, a few barons suborned by John—though most of them surrendered as soon as they were assured of the King's return. At one castle Richard, with his own crossbow, shot a rebel knight on the ramparts. To dispel any idea that Henry might have forced him to surrender some of his royal rights, he had himself crowned again at Winchester.

John came crawling, and was, as usual,

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy*, p. 141. Manchester, 1913.

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forgiven. Richard had an almost womanly tenderness for his younger brother, and, apart from that, quite underestimated his ability, so that John's intrigues never seemed to him to matter much. He laughed at the grave faces of his counsellors when they came to tell him that his erring brother waited without. 'John,' he said gently, raising his brother from the floor, 'don't be afraid ; you are a child <sup>1</sup> ; you have had bad companions, and they shall pay for it.' John was always the spoilt child of this strange family.

Then Richard, having crossed the Channel for the last time, set about restoring the position in France. To describe the ensuing operations in any detail would, for our present purposes, be a waste of time—though they occupied all the last five years of his life. It is only in very occasional flashes that they throw any light on his character ; while, from the point of view of the student of military history, such a narrative would read like a mere repetition of the earlier chapters of this book. European warfare at this period, as already noted, usually resolved itself into a monotonous succession of sieges, and this campaign was no exception to that rule.

But there was a marked difference in one respect—the bitter personal feeling that had

<sup>1</sup> He was actually twenty-seven years of age.

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arisen between the Kings of England and of France. Richard, as a soldier, was intent upon recovering his castles and restoring the frontiers which Philip had violated in his absence. He would do that, of course—but at the back of his mind there was a still stronger desire to secure the person of his enemy. To have sent Philip over to England as a prisoner would have been a sweet and, on the whole, just revenge. Thus, whenever Philip himself appeared in the neighbourhood, Richard would leave whatever he was doing and pursue him recklessly. At Fréteval, in July 1194, he nearly caught him. Philip, hearing of his approach, had, as usual, retreated; but Richard, by a forced march, overtook the French rearguard, cut it to pieces, and galloped on, looking for the King. An unnamed Flemish soldier saved Philip from capture: he told the King of England that his rival was on ahead with the van, whereas he had turned aside to hear Mass in a village church, and so escaped.

On another occasion Philip put forward the suggestion that the quarrel might be settled by a judicial combat between teams of five knights chosen from either side. Richard promptly replied that he would consent on one condition—that the two kings took part and opposed each other personally on equal terms. Whereupon Philip dropped the idea. But this per-

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sonal feeling introduced a new note of savagery into the fighting, reminiscent of Palestine rather than Europe. Richard had brought over a troop of wild Welshmen to help him, and Philip, incensed at their unconventional methods of warfare, surrounded three thousand of them near the Vale of Andely and slaughtered them to a man. Richard, in retaliation, put out the eyes of fifteen French prisoners and sent them to Philip in that condition ; and Philip thereupon blinded fifteen Englishmen and sent them to Richard, with the wife of one of them acting as guide. We may call these methods uncivilised : they were really Byzantine.

It seems hardly necessary to add that Richard succeeded in all his main objects. He re-established his frontiers and restored order in all his dominions—first in Normandy, then in Aquitaine—until he had once more drawn a circle of hostile states round the kingdom of France, just as it existed—though then less united and powerful—before the Crusade. He was, of course, not only a more dashing leader, but from every point of view a better soldier than his antagonist. And his greatest contribution to the art of warfare during this period was highly characteristic of him. It took the form of the most powerful and scientifically-constructed fortress in the world—Château-Gaillard—a masterpiece of military

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architecture. As Sir Charles Oman has noted,<sup>1</sup> Richard 'was no mere copyist of the models which he had seen in the East, but introduced many original details of his own invention into the stronghold,' so that Château-Gaillard is 'not exactly a typical castle of the last years of the twelfth century, but rather an abnormally superior specimen of its best work.'

It stood on the end of a spur of high ground on the isle of Andely, guarding the approach to Rouen, and had an outer, a middle, and an inner ward. The walls of the inner ward—which Richard had made his special study—were built in semi-circles, or bulges, so that enfilading fire could always be obtained along the ditch between these bulges (or perhaps scallops is a better word) although the wall had no towers. The parapets of the walls were crowned with one of the earliest examples in Europe of stone machicolations—that is to say, narrow corridors carried out from the walls, with holes in their floors through which boiling oil and missiles could be dropped upon the assailants' heads. All these were bold and striking innovations at the time, and, taken in conjunction with the highly scientific ground-plan of the castle, they mark Richard out as the military genius that he undoubtedly was. In another age, when the attack was more

<sup>1</sup> *The Art of War in the Middle Ages.*

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nearly equal to the defence, and when the archers and pikemen had learned to stand up to the cavalry in the open field, his gifts would have had more scope, and the names of his victorious battles might have been on every English schoolboy's lips, along with those of Cressy, Poitiers and Agincourt. As it is, his biographer can only point to Château-Gaillard, of which enough remains to-day to impress the occasional visitor, however little interested in such matters, with a sense of its power and its efficiency, and of the keenness and originality of the brain that planned it.<sup>1</sup>

Richard is said to have stood before this finished castle, this masterpiece of his, and, like an artist in a glow of self-congratulation, exclaimed : ' Behold, how fair is this year-old daughter of mine ! ' His enthusiasm was excusable enough. But it is time that we should now take notice of the continued absence of any legitimate human children from his life.<sup>2</sup> It is a baffling subject, and the evidence is too slight to make it worth pursuing far. We know that there was a temporary estrangement from Berengaria, and that early in the year 1195 a certain man of God, greatly esteemed as a hermit and with all the courage

<sup>1</sup> After Richard's death Philip reduced the castle—but it took him six months of hard fighting.

<sup>2</sup> We hear of one illegitimate son.

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of his type, came into Richard's presence and said : ' Be mindful of the ruin of Sodom, and put away thy unlawful doings ; else the vengeance of God will come upon thee.' Richard was inclined to resent this admonition. He was no longer in the mood which had inspired him to make public confession of his sins in that little chapel at Messina. But a few days later he was suddenly struck down by illness, and he took this as a warning. Rising from his sick-bed, he sent for Berengaria and was reconciled to her, and lived with her to the day of his death. He summoned the clergy and did penance for his sins, and from that day began the excellent daily practice of attending early Mass. As a consequence, says the chronicler, ' God gave him health of body as well as of soul.' Not one of these Angevins was quite normal—not even the best of them.

Of Richard's determination to return to Palestine and complete his work there no one ever had any doubt. He had to save his own soul as well as the Sepulchre. It was for that reason that he was always anxious to get on with the war in France, and that the contest became increasingly bitter as the years slipped by. He exposed himself in action with all his old recklessness, though he was beginning to put on flesh now and could not move quite as quickly as in former years to avoid an arrow



or a sword-thrust. At the siege of Gaillon, in 1196, a Welsh mercenary in Philip's service hit him on the knee with a bolt from a cross-bow, so that he was laid up for weeks. Yet he continued to ride out in front of the ranks in his old arrogant way, coolly inspecting the walls of some hostile city fringed with expert marksmen, so that he escaped death by inches about once in every fortnight of his life.

In March 1199, a peasant, driving his plough in the neighbourhood of Châlus, encountered some obstacle in the soil which, upon further investigation, turned out to be a very beautiful and apparently valuable relic of Roman civilisation. It is described by a medieval chronicler as 'an Emperor with his wife, sons and daughters, all of pure gold, and seated round a golden table.' In addition to this group, there were other objects of value and a number of Roman coins. Richard claimed the treasure from the Lord of Châlus, and when the latter proved obdurate, marched with a small following to enforce his claim.

It was a paltry quarrel, but he pursued it with his usual intensity. When the garrison of Châlus, exactly forty strong, showed signs of resistance, he set his miners to dig beneath the walls, and himself rode out daily with the crossbowmen to cover their operations. On the afternoon of the third day he was riding,

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with the mercenary captain, Mercadier, and one or two others, along the edge of the ditch, amusing himself by exchanging shots with the defenders on the walls. He was in a defiant mood : the garrison had just sent in an offer of surrender, but he had sworn, in reply, to hang every mother's son of them. He had not even troubled to arm himself properly before leaving his tent, and was protected only by a breast-plate and a shield on his left arm.

There was one man in the garrison who had made himself conspicuous throughout the siege by his almost foolhardy courage. He was now standing boldly on a bastion of the tower, silhouetted against the sky. In his right hand he held a crossbow, with which he kept shooting at the besiegers on the other side of the ditch. In his left hand was a common frying-pan, and with this strange buckler he was dexterously turning aside every missile aimed at him in return. Richard was amused—it was just the sort of exploit that pleased him—and as his party neared the spot, he probably rode up close to the ditch to get a good view of the man. The Frenchman saw him, and instantly recognised him—for Richard's appearance was unmistakable. It appeared afterwards that the crossbowman had been waiting for this chance all day. He raised his weapon and took careful aim at Cœur de Lion.

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Only two or three times in history has so much hung upon a single shot. The fate of Normandy, of England, and of the Holy Sepulchre itself—all these were, in that moment, at stake.

Richard saw it coming. It was a good shot, and we have it on the best authority that he paused to shout up a word of approval—like a spectator at a cricket match—before ducking behind his shield. That pause, that action so typical of all that was best in his character, was now to cost him his life. He ducked a fraction of a second too late. The missile—apparently it was not a crossbow quarrel, but an arrow which the marksman had snatched up in his haste—struck the King at the juncture of his left shoulder and his neck, glanced downwards, and embedded itself in his side.

He turned his horse and rode coolly back to his tent. He seems to have tried to pull out the arrow, but it broke, leaving the barb in the wound, and he had to send for the camp surgeon, who was a muddler, and was generally blamed for his death. He lay there in agony, growing steadily worse, and—as soon as he realised his situation—sending urgent messages to his stout-hearted old mother, who came immediately, and was with him at the end. Mercadier brought him the news that the garrison of Châlus had surrendered,

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and he asked Richard to decide their fate. But the King answered promptly and cheerfully that he had promised to hang them, and, by God's throat, hanged they should be.

He was emphatic, however, that there must be one exception—the man who had shot him. So they took this man, a certain Bertrand de Gourdon, and brought him bound into the presence of the dying King. Richard managed to smile faintly at him. 'Why did you kill me?' he asked. The man answered defiantly: 'You slew my father and my two brothers with your own hands, and would have slain me likewise. Take what vengeance you will, for I will willingly suffer any torments, now that you, who have brought so much evil on the world, are stricken here to death.'

It was bravely spoken—in the Norman-French that was the common language of all present. Richard sighed and closed his eyes. This was part of the inevitable accompaniment of feudal warfare. But while he could still speak, he ordered them to set this man at liberty, with a gift of a hundred English shillings. (Yet the only remaining fact that has come down to us about Bertrand de Gourdon is that the breath had hardly left Cœur de Lion's body when they did him to death, in the manner of those times, probably with torture.)

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When Richard was dead, they took his big, sinful body and sent it to Fontevrault Abbey, as he had directed, for burial ; and they put his brave heart—it was rumoured to be twice the normal size—into a golden casket and placed it ceremoniously in the cathedral church of Rouen.

So was he gathered to his fathers, with his work only half done, but his tradition of sportsmanship and chivalry imperishable, in the East as in the West. And his name is still held in affectionate remembrance in every cottage home of England, where he so seldom set foot, no less than in those Eastern lands to which he brought fire and the sword. He is the only one of our medieval kings whose name means anything to the commonalty of England to-day ; the only one they yet talk and laugh about, celebrating his exploits (Richard would have liked that) in rough music-hall song ; the only one they still admire and understand, as their ancestors did in his lifetime. What higher honour can a king desire ?

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